



## DOCTOR OF BUSINESS (DBA)

### **Creating a holistic environment: administrative quality at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus**

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**CREATING A HOLISTIC ENVIRONMENT:  
ADMINISTRATIVE QUALITY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE  
WEST INDIES, MONA CAMPUS**

An Institutional Study of the University of the West Indies, Mona  
Campus, Kingston, Jamaica, West Indies

By

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A thesis submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Business Administration, Higher Education Management  
University of Bath  
School of Management  
March 2010

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Angella Marie Stephens

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Finally, I wish to dedicate this research to the Mona Campus of the University of the West Indies, and sincerely trust that it may be beneficial to the envisioned transformation of the Mona Campus. I also dedicate the research to my daughter Jodi-Ann, my mother Dorothy, siblings, and friends whose support, encouragements, prayers and well wishes contributed to its success.



## **ABSTRACT**

Demands by higher education stakeholders in the late 1980s to early 1990s, led the higher education sector to focus on issues of effectiveness, accountability and efficiency. This was as true in the West Indies as elsewhere in the world. The University of the West Indies (UWI) reviewed its governance structure and established an academic quality assurance mechanism to respond to these challenges. More than a decade has passed since the implementation of this major initiative, and quality has since formed an integral part of the UWI's strategic plans since 1997. Concerns have continually been raised however about the quality of the service provided. This is the focus of this study. This topic was explored and evaluated through the use of three units of analysis using a qualitative case study of the Mona campus. The methods used to gather data were essentially qualitative, using interviews, focus groups, and documentary research. The theoretical orientation was grounded in the quality literature, drawing on both the industrial literature as well as that in higher education. My findings paved the way for judgments which indicated that various quality procedures are employed in different parts of the UWI, Mona Campus. Some of these procedures do not seem to have produced the overall quality culture of excellence which was intended. Out of the information and commentaries produced by the respondents a unified quality framework has been produced that pays attention to effective procedures, processes, and systems. These criteria were assembled in a model to inform practice at the UWI and enhance the overall transformation process of the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan.

Keywords: Angella Marie Stephens, administrative, holistic, quality, higher education.

## **Chapter One Introduction**

### **BACKGROUND**

#### **The Colonial Influences: Haunting Shadows of the Past**

The countries in the Commonwealth Caribbean share in common a special history and similar institutions, yet are diverse in language and culture. Among the language and cultural influences in the Caribbean are the West African, Taino, Dutch, the English, the Spanish and the French with indentured workers having been added to the cultural mix from India and China. The Commonwealth Caribbean comprises seventeen countries namely: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos Islands; all were colonized by the British in the early seventeenth century and referred to then as British West Indian Colonies. As colonies, they were exploited for their resources so long-term development of these countries was therefore left underdeveloped (Miller 2000). During the period of enslavement, indentureship, and colonialism, both the lands and its peoples were severely exploited. Sherlock and Nettleford (1990) summarize the following inhumane treatment of the enslaved thus:

Captured, sold, stripped of all the ties of affection and blood relationship, of the rights of personality and all the possessions that

human beings hold dear, torn from their language groups, religious shrines, holy places, cut off from a past rich in tradition, separated from the guardianship of their ancestors and doomed to perpetual servitude in distant lands, subject to the whims of 'owners' and 'masters' who purchased them and gave them the legal standing pieces of property, they endured and finally overcame. (p.1).

Evidence of the colonial heritage still exists in these post colonial countries (Eaton 1966; Beckford and Witter 1980) including the 16 countries served by the University of the West Indies (UWI). These campus countries experienced major onslaughts in various degrees in an effort to confront the colonial power-structure. The experience of exploitation and loss in Jamaica and Trinidad, for example, was greater when compared to the other territories in the Caribbean (Henry 1972). Jamaica is the largest of the British Caribbean Colonies, in terms of population, and took the lead in confronting the colonial power-structure. Trinidad experienced a shorter period of slavery than Jamaica and the other islands.

Vestiges of the past colonial experience still linger on into the present along with elements of earlier social institutions which have long become obsolete (Eaton 1966; Beckford and Witter 1980). In the Caribbean, slavery ended formally in the seventeenth century, yet hints of this period continue to create an impact in the minds of the people through institutions such as the education system, the culture, the architecture, the national honours awarded to national heroes, and the official assignment of

national holidays such as National Heroes Day, Emancipation Day, Independence Day - all celebrate the reception of 'freedom'.

### **THE RESEARCH CONTEXT: Background to the UWI**

The University of the West Indies (UWI) is a regional institution with four "branches". Three campus "branches" and an open campus "branch", serve 16 countries within the Commonwealth Caribbean, and collaborate with approximately 60 other universities around the world to deliver quality academic programmes. It is also the largest and oldest higher education provider in the Commonwealth Caribbean. UWI began in 1948, when a group of West Indian visionaries decided to "unlock West Indian potential" through providing opportunities for higher education. This unlocking is expressed in the University's motto: "Oriens Ex Occidente Lux – A Light Rising from the West". The UWI has enjoyed elite institutional status since it was first established as a College of the University of London, England, in 1948. It received university status in 1963 through a Royal Charter.

Today, the institution boasts approximately 96,000 graduates from across the seven faculties offering undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes in Medical Sciences, Science and Agriculture, Engineering, Law, Pure and Applied Sciences, Humanities and Education, and Social Sciences. These graduates hold high positions in the public and private sectors, and some are renowned leaders who have made sterling

contributions to nation building throughout the Commonwealth region and the world (Vice Chancellor's Report to Council 2007/2008). Registration at UWI stands at approximately 40,673 students in 2007/2008. UWI's former monopoly status has now been challenged with the establishment of other national tertiary level institutions and the entry of extra-regional institutions, resulting in competition for prospective students in the region.

The four "branches" of the UWI are: Mona in Kingston, Jamaica, which was formerly a college of the University of London in 1948; the St. Augustine in Trinidad and Tobago, which evolved in 1960 from the former Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, and the Cave Hill in Barbados, which was established in 1963. In 2008, a fourth "branch" was established from the non-campus contributing countries (the "UWI 12", the UWI Distance Education Centre, Tertiary Level Institutions, and Schools of Continuing Studies), all of which now fall under the umbrella of the UWI Open Campus. The non-campus countries are: Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts/Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, and Turks & Caicos Islands. In 2009, another Commonwealth country, Bermuda, was added to the "UWI 12" making it "UWI 13". The Open Campus is another attempt at managing the University's regional mission. This regional mission, decided on by the Conference of Heads of Caribbean Governments in 1989, is cited by Sherlock and Nettleford (1990, p. vi-vii) and states: "in view of the major

role which the University of the West Indies is being called upon to play, it shall remain a regional institution indefinitely.”

### **A View of the Mona “Branch”**

My research was conducted on the Mona “branch” of the UWI which is located in the Parish of St. Andrew in the island of Jamaica in the West Indies. The campus lies adjacent to the country’s largest reservoir, and at the foot of the Blue Mountains, famous for the cultivation of Blue Mountain coffee. To its east are the volatile communities of August Town, Hermitage, Tavern and Papine, and to its west are affluent communities such as Mona Heights, Hope Pastures, and Beverley Hills. The campus lies on 653 acres of land, formerly part of two sugar plantations. A few eighteenth century ruins have been preserved to maintain this historic heritage. For example, the University Chapel, which sits to the right of the main entrance on the campus was once a ruined rum store made of beautiful limestone; it was a donation to the UWI by Princess Alice, a former Chancellor. It was removed to the campus from Hampden Estate in the parish of Trelawny. Other historic legacies include a roman-style eighteenth- century aqueduct which meanders through the Mona community and onto the campus; it originally carried water to the reservoir, the wooden barracks of Gibraltar House, a boiling house, and a water wheel (Francis Brown 2004). These are everyday reminders of the colonial past.

### **A Day at the Mona “Branch”**

On any given day, at 7:30 a.m., the sound of a mechanical gong, originally operated by a time-keeper, ushers the ancillary level staff onto the campus to start the work day. This gong also announces the commencement of the two lunch breaks at 12:00 noon and at 1:00 p.m., and signals the end of the work day at 4:30 p.m. It is easy for staff and students alike from the neighbouring Commonwealth Caribbean countries to feel at home on the Mona campus as it reflects a similar historical, social and political development to their own countries.

On entering the campus you are struck by its serene beauty. The walk or drive through the campus is relaxing; large trees can be seen gently swaying in the wind. Tranquility is a phrase that often comes to my mind as I enter or leave the campus via the Queens Way. The guango and poui trees stand tall on wide-spreading roots, despite the onslaught of several major hurricanes, including Hurricane Gilbert, which devastated the campus in 1988. These trees, along with several courtyards, each on the outskirts of the four main faculties, provide cool lounge areas and shelters for the 12,263 registered students in 2007/2008 who may wish to relax in between classes, to “chill out” and enjoy the beauty of the Mona Campus.

### **PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore, and evaluate whether a higher education framework exists that guides administrators at

the UWI, Mona in their approach to quality. Based on the results of the findings of this study a framework was developed to improve practice. It is envisaged that this framework will serve to drive the thrust of the 2007/2012 Strategic Plan in the transformation of the administrative culture and processes, and complement the academic quality assurance system for a holistic quality environment.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Prior to the establishment of the University of Technology (UTECH) in 1995 and Northern Caribbean University (NCU) in 1999, the UWI, Mona, enjoyed a monopoly on tertiary education for over two decades and marketed itself on its image and reputation for producing renowned leaders throughout the region (The UWI: Unlocking the Potential of a Region, circa 1990; Vice Chancellor's Report to Council 2007/2008). This monopoly status was eroded in the 1990s as the region experienced rapid growth in the number of other tertiary level educational institutions. The UWI, for the first time, faced competition from extra-regional institutions as well as regional tertiary level institutions (Beckles et al. 2002; Report of the Chancellor's Task Force on Governance of the UWI, 2006; Leo Rhynie, 2007, 2005; Stephens-Knott 2001). In Jamaica alone, fifty government funded higher education institutions were registered by January 2009 <<http://www.universitycouncilja.com/credit/registered.htm>, [Accessed 4 February 2009].



The development and implementation of a Quality Assurance System at the UWI aims at assuring academic quality in all undergraduate programmes using a “fitness for purpose” model. According to Leo-Rhynie (2003), this system, has to a large extent, become part of the culture of the institution. The UWI, therefore, envisions that this system will embrace the quality philosophy with greater urgency, while at the same time building a full quality culture and ensuring that the campus maintains its competitive edge.

The main concerns that I bring to the research are the teething pains being encountered in the process of sensitizing the UWI to achieving a quality environment which is all embracing and reflected in the administrative processes and systems. Leo-Rhynie (2003), states that “little mention [is made] of the importance of quality in some of the administrative practices of the university and the interactions students share with faculty, staff and other students” (p.5). She further states “the need for a more inclusive view of quality to encompass administrative and service areas and so build a community where all members were expected to be engaged in building the UWI as a quality driven institution” (ibid, p. 5). These sentiments are also shared by many of the various stakeholders of the UWI, including students who repeatedly call for quality in all aspects of the learning environment (Student Exit Surveys, 2003, 2005, 2006, and 2007). Similar to the Quality Assurance System for academic programmes, an

administrative quality approach would serve to offer a holistic quality-driven institution.

Stakeholders with vested interest in higher education have made various calls for greater efficiency and effectiveness in the operations of the sector. In view of this, the debate abounds on the applicability of business-oriented frameworks such as, Total Quality Management (TQM), which, some claim, can be transferred to higher education. Middlehurst (1992); Chaston (1994); Crawford 1991, cited by Chaston 1994, support the transfer of TQM to higher education especially when it is used as an organizing principle. Others discuss the application of these frameworks which pose many barriers, including the challenges of developing an internal quality culture before implementation, (Middlehurst 1992; Winter 1991, cited by Middlehurst 1992; Chaston 1994; Crawford 1991, cited by Chaston 1994; Sherr and Teeter 1991, cited by Middlehurst 1992). They likewise agree that TQM can serve to counter some of the challenges that higher education brings to bear. For example, they suggest that institutional leaders build commitment and consensus about quality across all levels in the institution (Middlehurst 1992; Winter 1991; Miller and Innis 1990; Sherr and Teeter 1991, cited by Middlehurst 1992). Some, including Hall (1996), argue that TQM offers little to higher education mainly because universities already focus on quality and quality improvement. He further argues that managerial changes in higher education have made TQM obsolete. More recent research, notably in the

works of Houston (2007) and Srikantham & Dalrymple (2002; 2003; 2005) point to the nature and purpose of higher education which they claim ought to be taken into account before the application of TQM and any other business-oriented framework. A transformation model was put forward by Middlehurst (1997); Harvey & Knight (1996); Thackwray and Hamblin (1996); and Sallis (2002) to manage the administrative and academic areas of universities respectively. The literature also suggests that in most cases, quality in higher education targets teaching but it is unclear as to the relationship that exists between quality in the academic areas and quality in the support areas of the institution (Middlehurst 2007). It is against this background that the research question is posed: *What framework exists in higher education that guides UWI administrators in their approach to quality?*

## **RESEARCHER'S JOURNEY**

Higher education has been part of my life since I began working in the University of the West Indies in 1979. My journey as a senior administrator commenced approximately eighteen years ago with experiences gained across six administrative departments working in both staff and student affairs. It was important for me to further develop myself as I endeavoured to serve the UWI at higher levels in administration and so I used the opportunity provided by the UWI through its educational policy. I therefore equipped myself with a first and second degree in Management Studies and Public Sector Management respectively. My

present position is in the office that is responsible for carrying out the functions for the Board for Undergraduate Studies (BUS). BUS was given the mandate in 1994 to assuring quality in teaching and learning.

### **RESEARCHER'S STANCE**

I approach this research with the lens of an administrator who has witnessed and experienced the growth of UWI Mona both as an observer and a participant. In a number of ways this growth has mirrored my own professional and personal development. The UWI Mona and I have grown together and I have encountered a number of successes and challenges. I am conscious of the benefits of tertiary education which I was privileged to receive from the UWI, and this has further contributed to the affinity I have for the institution. This affinity has led me to focus my attention towards involvement in more quality student-centred endeavours. My service to UWI Mona is therefore not only restricted to my substantive role as a senior administrator, but also includes other extra-departmental service. For example, I have been involved in the UWI Mentorship Programme since 1996 and in the “Train the Trainers” Programme since 2001. These experiences have allowed me opportunities to disseminate information on the objectives emanating from the strategic plans and to directly address individual contributions to administrative and academic quality with the staff and students that I serve.

The administrative experiences gained in the process of implementing and utilizing various administrative systems and procedures were concretized for me in 2003 after participating in the University Management Course at the University of Manitoba in Canada. This course was designed to enhance the leadership and managerial skills of administrators in post-secondary institutions. I came to realize and be committed to the notion that in order for the vision of the UWI's Strategic Plans to be realized, a broader concept of quality was needed at the UWI; a concept which fell into the last two quality developmental stages described by Middlehurst (1997). Her four-stage quality development model views quality on a continuum with quality control and quality assurance at the lower end and quality enhancement and quality transformation at the upper end. I am interested in quality enhancement and quality transformation in this model, which captures a holistic educational experience that is gained from both inside and outside of the classroom and which encourages complete transformation of an individual (Middlehurst 1997). In answer to the concerns of the employers of the UWI graduates, the present Strategic Plan speaks to this kind of transformation for its graduates. As a senior administrator, I therefore fully support Potter's (1999) statement that "As administrators, we are stewards of learning, creating and sustaining positive learning environments and participating as co-teachers and co-learners" (p.12). This transformation stage does require administrators to be willing to support and complement the role of the

academics in the holistic learning environment. It is important for me to have a voice in the decision-making process for the transformation of the institution and I therefore went in pursuit of the Doctor of Business Administration to further equip me professionally in strengthening higher education management at the UWI.

In this study, I assumed the role of an evaluator which afforded me the opportunity to explore the question: *What framework exists in higher education that guides UWI administrators in their approach to quality?* If a framework exists, it is important to find out what it looks like and how effective it is. I also evaluated the extent to which the management style and culture affected the operations of the framework identified. This then paved the way for recommendations based on my evaluation and understanding of the framework and its impact, or lack thereof.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In addressing the research problem, the following key questions guide the case study:

1. Is there a framework in higher education that guides UWI Mona Campus administrators in their approach to quality?
2. How applicable is this framework?
3. To what extent does the management style and culture as a whole affect administrative quality?

4. What do university administrators and customers (students) see as the criteria for administrative quality?

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

The research, *Creating a Holistic Environment: Administrative Quality at UWI, Mona Campus*, is significant as it contributes to the body of literature on management frameworks in higher education, especially in the Caribbean region where little work has been done in this area. It also lends support to the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan being implemented at the UWI with its emphasis on “transforming the administrative culture and processes of the institution” (pp. 10, 29). The study breaks new ground by gathering empirical data from stakeholders other than policy makers and implementers of administrative systems who are often the focus of such inquiries. Some of these are end users of the University’s administrative systems and are best able to highlight the issues faced in the utilization of the frameworks identified by them. The research is also of significance in the general area of higher education administrative processes. Its focus on developing a generic model, which is geared to the architecture of the traditional university as well as the management of the new business-oriented university which means it can contribute to understanding the reorientation necessary. This generic model or framework addresses the holistic nature and function of universities which offers more to higher education than other business models in their purest forms (Srikanthan and Dalrymple 2002, 2005, 2007). The study can make a contribution to, and

improve practice for decision makers, practitioners, and implementers at the UWI in particular, but others in higher education elsewhere who may wish to adapt the findings of this case to fit their particular circumstances and context. Such an improvement in the operations may also be of interest to the 16 governments who contribute to the overall funding of the UWI; similarly, tax payers; parents; prospective, current, and future students; staff; and other stakeholders who would be interested to continue their support to a quality-driven and forward-moving institution.

## **RESEARCH PARAMETERS**

The research was conducted on the Mona “Branch” of the UWI. The choice of a single campus of UWI, Mona Campus, was specifically to investigate the changes envisaged in the strategic transformation of the campus towards a quality environment as aimed for in *UWI Strategic Plan 2007-2012*, (pp. 34-37). The transformation aims at “enhancing responsiveness to legitimate stakeholder needs and expectations; infusing systems and processes with the flexibility required of a responsive and agile organization [and] managing culture change to foster efficiency, effectiveness excellence and accountability at every level” (*UWI Strategic Plan 2007-2012*, pp. 9-10).

The research questions were site-specific as the problem identified was informed by practice (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). These questions could best be answered through one-to-one “elite” interviews, focus



group studies, and documentary research conducted at the Mona Campus, with a specific group of senior executive management, senior administrators in central administration and academic departments, academics, and students. I further limited the study by grounding the research questions in the theoretical framework of the quality movement by showing how it began in the industrial world and in the private sector, how it evolved to the public sector and later to the higher education sector. The questions were linked to organizational practices employed in educational administration.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE CHAPTERS**

This first chapter introduces the purpose of the study and the research problem. It gives an overview of the colonial impact in the commonwealth Caribbean and Jamaica, the background of the University of the West Indies as the context of the enquiry, the significance of the research, as well as the research journey and stance of the researcher. Chapter 2 presents the theoretical orientation, which is grounded in the quality movement and industrial theories of administration and management and their applicability to the practice of service organizations in general and the higher education sector in particular. Some higher education frameworks are examined with a view to determining how far these principles are applicable or can be adapted to higher education in the Caribbean. It also evaluates whether the management style and culture of the organization affect administrative quality. The literature in the field

was explored on issues of institutional culture, leadership, and management styles and how these may affect the advancement of the vision of the UWI. Chapter 3 discusses the design of a qualitative case study in which I explored and evaluated the research question: *What framework exists in higher education that guides how UWI administrators approach quality?* It also discusses the ethics which guide the research, the methodological approach that frames the research, including the research design, research questions, choice of methods, the sample investigated, data collection, instrumentation, and the process of data analysis. Chapter 4 presents the empirical findings. This was aided by the use of narrative, reflectivity, and strips of talk to provide thick rich descriptions of the experiences of key informants. Chapter 5 discusses the implications of the findings, concludes the study and charts the way forward. It also takes the audience through my journey in pursuit of the DBA, at the University of Bath, in the United Kingdom from 2004 through to 2010.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

*“Everyone has the right to expect good service from higher education”  
The Charter for Higher Education (DfE 1993).*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The context within which this research takes place is the higher educational institution of the Mona “Branch” of the UWI. The study takes into consideration the perspectives of the students as the main stakeholders in services delivered – academic and administrative. Issues related to the delivery of services were expressed in several reports, including the strategic plans (1997-2012) and student surveys (UWI 2003-2007). The research therefore seeks to inform the debate on what higher education framework exists that guides UWI administrators in their approach to quality, what such frameworks would look like, and how it would interface with the current academic quality assurance system at the UWI for the creation of a holistic quality environment.

At the outset of this research, I held two assumptions, namely: 1) that a framework exists on the Mona “Branch” that guides UWI administrators in their everyday work, and 2) administrative frameworks are important in higher education as they serve to provide guidance for greater accountability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency. These qualities set the stage for institutions in the sector to be better able to rise to the

competition. In researching the question, “What administrative framework exists in higher education that guides how UWI administrators approach quality”, it was important to ground the study in the quality literature. The discussion starts with a brief outline of the relevance of the quality movement in the private sector through to the public sector and higher education.

## **INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES**

### **The ‘Quality Movement’: Private To Public Sector**

The quality movement in higher education had its roots in the industrial practice of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Concerns about quality originated first in the private sector and later moved to the public sector and later to higher education. The first stage of its development was evident in the 20th century in the manufacture of the ‘T’ model car by the Ford Motor Company where the quality method employed was through inspection (Dahlgaard et al. 1998; Gitlow et al. 1989). During the 19th and early 20th centuries, demands for accuracy in manufacturing, precision of measurement, standardization and interchangeability of parts in the manufacturing industries set the stage for the basic principles of modern quality control which had as its main principle, customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction remains relevant to service organizations including those in higher education. In higher education this relevance is not only due to the demands for accountability and efficiency that the customers

placed on the sector, but also the varied choices that these customers might make on competing institutions regarding their educational development (Sallis 2002). In an effort to be business oriented, some writers have suggested that higher education institutions might consider shifting focus to a consumer paradigm wherein the satisfaction of the customer to the point of 'delight' would envision gaining an edge over the competition, (Hall 1996; Doherty 1994, in Hall 1996). This literature further highlights that higher education critics do not clearly see this concept of customer as fitting with the purpose for which institutions in the sector were constructed especially as it is "rooted in commercial origins as that of TQM" (Hall 1996, p.26).

The quality movement in industry was guided by administrative and management theorists whose emphasis was on general and industrial administration. Frederick Taylor's Scientific Management Philosophy, for example, later informed modern quality control principles (Morrison 1998) through planning, standardizing and improving human effort at the operational level to maximize output with minimum input. The principles of Scientific Management allowed for increased efficiency of industrial operations and set the stage for management and organizational concepts that were important for the development of theory (Kast and Rosenzweig 1979). Yet the critics of Taylor rejected this movement as it was claimed, among other things, that it stifled initiative and other humanistic principles. The movement, however, paved the way for other

management theorists including Henry Fayol, who was concerned with efficiency at the top of organizational hierarchies. He defined the basic functions of management through the use of five basic elements: 1) planning, 2) organization, 3) command, 4) coordination, and 5) control, which “gave definition to the administrative process” (Hanson 1985, p 22). These, he claimed, were applicable not only to business, but also to other organizations including government (Kast and Rosenzweig 1979).

The behavioural sciences impacted on the quality movement with the emphasis that the motivational theorists placed on human relations in industry (Kast and Rosenzweig 1979). The role of the leadership with regards to the motivation of the workforce for greater efficiency is of relevance to this study, especially in light of the effects that it might have on the internal and external users of the system. The modern approach to educational administration emphasized the social system comprising inputs, process and output. This systems approach contributes to the ongoing debate on the uniqueness of the inputs and outputs of the higher education process (Sahney et al. 2004). These theoretical and philosophical theories of the early management thinkers set the stage for the emergence of modern management with the focus on the desire for greater efficiency and effectiveness as necessary tools for quality products in industry.

The works of Deming, Juran, and Crosby, which focused on some quality principles conceptualized as Total Quality Management (TQM) contributed further to the development of the quality movement in the twentieth century in Europe, America, and Japan. Deming's philosophy of management emphasized quality as a management responsibility which, if efficiently carried out, would contribute to high quality products and services to the satisfaction (and delight) of consumers (customers, clients, students) (Dale et al. 1990). This philosophy incorporates quality in the design stage and is of relevance to this research especially as it brings to the debate the importance of the design of management systems for continual improvement of quality. This overriding quality management philosophy is reflected in the culture where quality control is everybody's responsibility. It places emphasis on worker empowerment and long-term investment in the training and competence of front-line workers, which would not only be to the benefit of external stakeholders, but would also include fellow workers who depend on the quality work of others (Sallis 2002; Liston 1999). This philosophy underpins the *kaizen* concept from which the term quality assurance evolved.

Thinking about quality evolved through four stages during the 1970s to 1990s. These are inspection, quality control, quality assurance, and Total Quality Management (TQM). The inspection system is an end result of an internal screening process and allows for products and services to meet specified standards. Quality Control is regarded as an improvement of the

inspection system as it allows for a fulfillment of quality requirements thus allowing for greater process control and fewer occurrences of non-conformance. Quality Assurance is a prevention based system which includes the necessary activities to provide the confidence that a product or service will satisfy given requirements for quality. The highest level of quality management is TQM which is regarded as a company-wide approach to quality and includes management principles applied to all aspects of the organization (Sallis 2002; Dale et al. 1990).

Whereas the private sector was driven to improved efficiency based on pressures from greater competition, the drive to improve efficiency in the public sector stemmed mainly from government actions (Stewart et al. 1992). These pressures influenced the need to improve effectiveness in schools to match the benefits of industrial mass production which rose significantly as it was felt that the business sector had the know-how to organize and manage things (Harris, Jamieson and Russ 1996). By the mid-1990s the emphasis on service was fused to quality and was adapted to meet the specific environment of educational institutions as was the business practice (Liston 1999).

### **Quality In Higher Education**

It is important at this point to reflect on the quality movement in higher education, to examine how far it has evolved, or whether it has changed course. As stated earlier, the industrial ethos of quality in early eras



mandated accuracy, precision and standardization as important criteria resulting in an end result process of inspection. Improvements to the quality inspection system resulted in quality control which later evolved to quality assurance and total quality management (Dale et al. 1990). This quality evolution coincided with classical, social system, and open system theories which impacted on the business and industrial organizations. The contingency theory evolved from these earlier organizational theories and, as indicated by Hanson (1985), offers organizations the ability to adapt to changing environments.

With the ongoing debate on the industrial and educational models of quality assurance in higher education there have been moves to follow the industry lead in quality management (Srikanthan & Dalrymple 2003). It has been argued by some that the industrial models are not always suitable to the education sector. This is due to two main reasons: 1) that customer-centred definitions in industry take into consideration customer perception and opinion as key elements in defining the quality of a product or service so that it is important that the quality of the product meets the customer's perceived or stated needs (Whiteley 2002). To some extent the model is applicable to education as the perception of stakeholders is no doubt valuable (Stone 1997 in Whiteley *ibid*). The difficulty, Stone notes, lies in identifying who the customer is as students, employers, governments, staff, and parents are all regarded as stakeholders. Following on this thought is the challenge to the sector of satisfying the many different

stakeholders who are also viewed as customers. In view of this concept, quality in higher education must therefore be geared towards maintaining high standards in the provision of services to the stakeholders of education (Sallis 2002). Recent arguments abound about the concept of stakeholder satisfaction and whether or not higher education is about delighting the customer (Sallis 2002).

2) Another challenge is the identification of the product. In the industrial context, the product is tangible while in education the product is an intangible service. The service is also produced and consumed simultaneously therefore making the educational inputs much more difficult to control as compared to the products in industry. The production process in education involves inputs described as the students, who are stakeholders, and the producer who are the lecturers (Whiteley 2002). Following from these two reasons is a third which speaks to the concept of quality. The industrial concept of quality is often linked with conformity to specifications whereby for a service the specification comprises a number of standards and therefore assumes that the service can be measured and quantified (Whiteley 2002). Middlehurst (1995) highlights the main difference between the audit approaches in commercial and higher education such that the quality systems of universities and colleges are examined by peers, while in the commercial sector such systems are examined against national standards.

With the drive for greater accountability and efficiency in the higher education sector, systems of quality were established with varying quality definitions which indicate that measurements and standards first sought to control, and, later, assure quality. Inspection as a quality assurance feature in higher education is carried out through Quality Audits in order to ascertain whether or not the stated aims, objectives, and facilities have been institutionalized as claimed. Quality in higher education is therefore not new as academic excellence and high quality were unchallenged goals that formed a part of its tradition. Over the last two decades however, the sector experienced higher levels of turbulence in the environment and the emphasis on quality intensified as a means of gaining a competitive edge, (Freed et al. 1997). In addressing the most appropriate model of educational quality, varying definitions of quality have been applied to higher education, some of these are: high standards, fitness for purpose, value for money, transformative (Harvey 1996; Sallis 2000). In *The UWI Quality Circle* (2009), the findings point to the fact that senior administrators at the UWI, Mona Campus defined quality in similar ways (Stephens 2009).

The contributions of Harvey and Knight (1996) and Middlehurst (1997) are significant to this study with the focus they place on ‘transformative’ quality in higher education. This study seeks to investigate what higher education quality framework might be appropriate for the administrative function of higher education. This quality framework might reflect a

quality orientation throughout all levels of the academy starting with all employees through continuous improvement of the self (first and foremost), and also of systems, processes, and procedures throughout the academy. Liston (1999) cites the argument by Albrecht (1999) that universities and public service organizations be placed at the highest level of the quality service paradigm contingency model, where the value of the service is dependent on the perceptions of the customers. She takes the argument further by stating that higher education should have service based on strategies for value creation with disciplined means of assessing performance and ways of energizing academic and general staff and clients to believe in them. These arguments set the stage for an examination of a quality framework that aims to transform the present culture at the UWI to one that is totally quality-driven.

Middlehurst (1997) examines the concepts and context of quality and standards, while noting that quality definitions fall on a spectrum with quality enhancement and quality transformation at the upper ends. Since the 1990s, the thrust has been on quality assurance which impacts on set standards used to judge quality. She claims that quality can mean different things depending on different expectations and requirements. Barrow (1999) supports this statement by putting forward the view that quality is defined based on the needs of the institution.

More recently the debate at the UWI is focused on its system of Quality Assurance in the context of where the institution is, and where it ought to be. Based on the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan, the quality debate is focused on quality enhancement and quality transformation. As the quality movement continues in the rapidly changing environment it will impact on other factors including the culture of the organization, the leadership, and the change strategies that the leader will need to embrace in the transformation process.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORKS IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

The need for greater accountability for the use of public funding in higher education, and greater transparency and efficiency in the operations of this sector, were the main drivers for academic quality assurance. These drivers received a further push with institutional competition both nationally and internationally and current debates surround the applicability of business oriented frameworks in higher education. This research will examine three administrative frameworks. Two of these are Total Quality Management (TQM), and Investors in People (IiP), which have been implemented in the private and public sectors in higher education. Supporting and competing arguments will be offered in terms of how relevant they might be to quality in higher education. The third is an emerging generic framework which offers a holistic approach to the nature and purpose of universities and proposes the implementation of TQM to address the service function of universities and Quality

Management in Education (QME) to address the teaching and learning function.

### **Total Quality Management (TQM)**

TQM is described as a management philosophy, a strategy, or an approach which aims at improving quality independent of external approval as the standards approach does (Hall 1996). The TQM philosophy promotes understanding and implementation of quality management principles and concepts in every aspect of business activities throughout the entire organization through the application of sophisticated quality management techniques. Embedded in this philosophy are key elements such as commitment and leadership, planning and organization, use of quality management tools and techniques, education and training, involvement, teamwork, measurement and feedback, and culture change (Dahlgard et al. 1998; Sallis 1993; Dale 1994). Middlehurst (1992) examined whether quality can be assessed as an organizing principle in higher education. She showed that quality functioned as an organizing principle by bringing all institutional operations into common alignment around itself. She cites the contribution of Miller and Innis (1990) to further education and concludes, based on evidence derived from experiences in the private and public sectors, including higher education, that though there are numerous barriers, the opportunities that TQM offers will provide some countervailing forces.

Middlehurst highlights the benefits of TQM but cautions, along with others whom he cites (Winter 1991; Sherr and Teeter 1991; and DTI 1991), that the process is slow, costly, difficult, and hard due to the effort of maintaining an on-going commitment for quality improvement at every level and across all sections of the organization. Overcoming the barriers, she claims, rests with institutional leaders who might wish to view these as challenges to build commitment and consensus about quality amongst those involved and across the levels in the higher education system.

Higher education critics of TQM, however, have questioned its applicability to the sector. Hall (1996), for example, makes the claim that although many of the features of TQM have always been present in higher education they might not be as useful to universities especially since the 1990s due to funding and managerial changes with the introduction of financial devolution and accountability, and the development of hierarchical and managerial structures. These, he claims, replaces the collegiate and democratic structures which are driving institutions away from the TQM idea. He cites Murgatroyd (1994) who suggests that TQM is more powerful than any of the standards-approaches to quality improvements, but that other approaches might have as much to offer higher education as TQM.

Chaston (1994), on the other hand, supports the implementation of TQM but strongly asserts that this implementation should take effect only after prior measures aimed at creating internal customer chains have been

carried out. He supports this claim on two bases. First, from lessons learnt in the private sector and citing the works of Atkinson (1990); Oakland (1989); Schonberger (1990); Christopher et al. (1991); Berry (1984); Brown (1989) and Gronroos (1978), all of whom suggest that TQM is dependent on a culture in which all departments are committed to working together to optimize organizational performance.

Second, he provides evidence from research undertaken in 20 British universities where internal customer management practices were examined. The research indicated a number of internal barriers that needed to be overcome before British universities are at a stage where the implementation of TQM could become a feasible option. One of these barriers is that the internal cultures of these universities do not permit departments to work together to achieve organizational performance which is the essence of TQM. His research lends support to Crawford's (1991) model, which he cites, was based on a study of British universities. Crawford emphatically supports the utilization of TQM as a management strategy for the development of a quality ethos inside a higher education institution. Chaston (1994) also cites the work of Winter (1991), who presents the challenges that senior management in American Universities might face in utilizing TQM without first establishing the necessary mechanisms for a more cooperative internal environment.



Houston (2007) reiterates that the purpose and nature of universities determine the applicability of TQM. For example, he suggests, on the one hand, that the concepts and tools of TQM might be applicable to those areas of the university system that emphasize the business aspects, such as the administrative and service functions. On the other hand, he suggests that TQM might not be applicable to the core functions of teaching and learning, as it does not successfully address the cultures of higher education, nor the complex systems of processes for learning. He draws on Srikanthan and Dalrymple's (2002; 2005; 2007) holistic quality model which addresses different frameworks for the service and academic functions of universities respectively.

### **Investors in People (IiP)**

Investors in People (IiP) is an external national standard which was implemented first in the business sector and, more recently, in higher education in the United Kingdom. The IiP initiative emphasizes four main areas: 1) Commitment: public commitment from the top in the development of all employees to achieve business objectives; 2) Planning: revision of the training and development needs of all employees; 3) Action: ongoing training and development of individuals from recruitment and throughout their employment; 4) Evaluation of the investment in training and development in order to assess achievement and improve future effectiveness (Thackwray and Hamblin 1996; Sallis 2002). Sallis

(2002) opines that IiP is the methodology for developing staff in achieving the goals of the organization.

Harvey (1994), cited by Thackwray and Hamblin (1996, p.114) discusses quality as a 'transformative' process as more suitable to higher education than other quality definitions such as "high standards", "fitness for purpose", or "value for money" definitions which call for external scrutiny of quality. Transformation is viewed in terms of enhancement and empowerment of the life experiences of students through continuous staff development, innovation in teaching and learning, research and scholarship. In this context, Thackwray and Hamblin (ibid) claim the use of IiP as a vehicle for continuous quality on two counts. The training and development orientation that it brings to the fore and the link it has, not only for the development of business objectives at all levels of the organization, but also with having all staff embracing these objectives. Their claim is made on the basis of the successful implementation of IiP in two universities in the United Kingdom, following the conduct of surveys which aimed at assessing the existing training and development climate in each institution, as well as the reported success of over 50 higher education institutions involved in IiP. A common practice in the implementation of IiP in the United Kingdom is for individual departments to adopt IiP rather than for universities as a whole. The main reason has to do with the assumptions, that IiP make that there is agreement with and homogeneity of goals throughout the university. This

assumption however, is not based on the nature of universities in which the goals of faculty, which have to do with teaching and learning, can be quite different from those of administrators, who often focus on the support services provided to faculty.

### **A HOLISTIC MODEL: TQM and Quality Management Teaching and Learning (QMTL)**

Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2002; 2005; 2007) present a rationale for the development of a holistic model of quality in higher education by addressing separately the service and education functions and applying appropriate sets of criteria to each. The effectiveness of such a model, they claim, is dependent on the culture of an organization inclusive of the management structure and style. The model seeks to preserve the core values of scholarly inquiry and the transmission of knowledge for stability and continuity of its traditions and values (Duderstadt 2000; Green et al. 1997), as well as the administrative services that support those core activities.

Srikanthan and Dalrymple's (2002; 2005; 2007) holistic model is built on the concept of the 'learning organization' as they cite in the works of Argyris and Schon (1978); Boyer (1987); Senge (1992). The 'learning organization' concept is the basis for a culture that supports the balance of educational, service, and collegial interaction in organizational processes. It speaks to how people think, what they want, and how they relate to each other. It incorporates "transformation" of the learners, and collaboration

at the learning interface as two central foci arising from the four models of the “learning organization”: “Transformative Model” (Harvey and Knight 1996); “Engagement Model” (Haworth and Conrad 1997); “University of Learning” (Bowden and Marton 1998); and the “Responsive University” (Tierney 1998), as cited by Srikanthan and Dalrymple’s (2007, p.179).

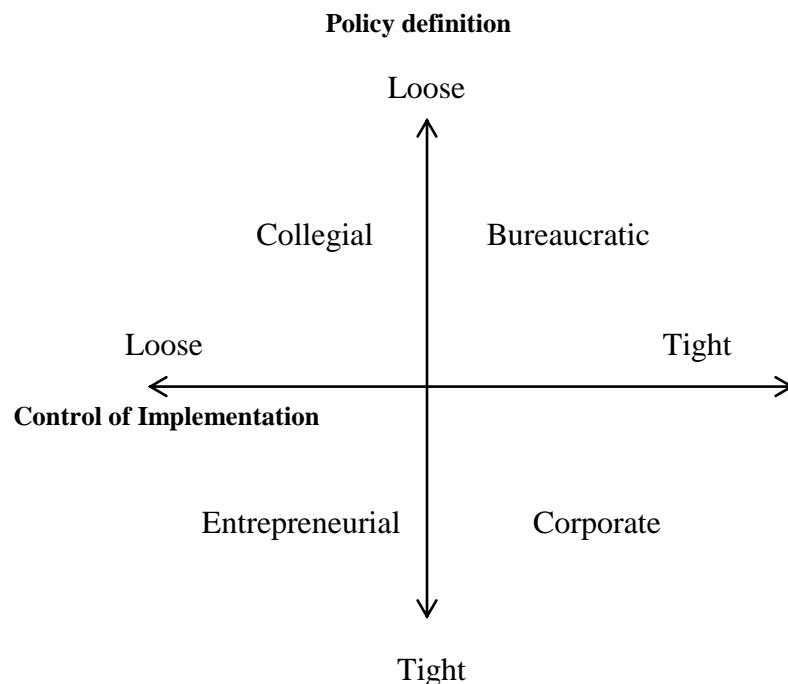
Houston (2007) notes that the transferability of TQM to higher education is largely dependent on the purpose and nature of the university. He cites the works of Srikanthan and Dalrymple’s (2002; 2005; 2007) in support of his claim and offers that TQM is more applicable to those who “subscribe to the image of the university as business...”. He cites Koch (2003) who states that TQM is not applicable “to those who subscribe to the image of the university of learning...” (p.12).

## **ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE**

The implementation of change in organizations poses challenges and its success is determined by the approach to issues of organizational culture, leadership and the role of the leader in the change process. This section focuses on these two main areas. The first draws on McNay’s (1995) and Dopson and McNay’s (1996) models of the four main cultures of organizations and helps in exploring how the culture of an organization might impede the changes called for by the desire to be more competitive. The second area focuses on the process of organizational change.

Lomas (1999), cites the works of Hofstede et al. (1990); Bax (1991; and Schein 1992); to support the claim that organizational cultures vary in higher education with the existence of sub-cultures which are affected by numerous factors such as differing mission statements, aim and objectives, size and nature of student intake, range of courses and emphasis on research (Schein 2004; McNay 1995; Dopson and McNay 1996). The four cultures identified in Dobson and McNay's (1996) model (see Figure 2.1) are the collegial, bureaucratic, entrepreneurial, and corporate, with each envisioning different leadership styles as a way of managing for success through the appropriateness of the 'fit' with the circumstances.

**Figure 2.1. Model of universities as organizations**



**Dopson and McNay's (1996)**

The 'fit' implies that some amount of flexibility in leadership styles is a necessity (McNay 1995, cited by Schuller 1995). From the Collegial Academy to Corporate Enterprise: The Changing Cultures of Universities, in: T.). These organizations are a mix of a variety of different cultures rather than just one pervasive culture (Lomas 1999). Lomas (1999) draws on the analysis of Schein's (1992) and Dopson and McNay's (1996) models, which evaluate organizational culture, and universities as organizations, to point to an understanding that the majority of these institutions lie in the upper half of the model; loose/loose or loose/tight. Such an analysis shows those traditional universities that still hold cultures that exhibit slow responses to changes in the external environment.

Research indicates that universities are going through culture changes. Fielden (1990) provides an explanation that the shifting cultures in the public sector and higher education in the 1980s emphasize aspects of best private practice being transferred to the public sector with the aim of 'catching up'. In one research it was indicated that over a ten-year period, 1989 to 1999, there have been shifts from the collegial and bureaucratic cultures towards cultures of corporation and enterprise (McNay 1995, in Schuller 1995). This timeframe might imply that the change from the collegial and bureaucratic cultures was in reaction to the competitive environment within which the higher education sector operates. In this ten-year period, for example, the perceived changes decreased in the collegium and bureaucratic cultures in each of the two five year periods,

and increased in the corporation and enterprise cultures, two-fold and three-fold respectively at the end of the ten-year period. This signified that certain factors including the constraints on public funding, and the competition for students might have driven the need for the evolving culture shifts.

Cultural changes are not revolutionary as indicated in the ten-year timeline culture shifts in McNay's (1995) study and several factors can impede such changes. For example, a change from the collegial and bureaucratic cultures to an entrepreneurial one will engender some amount of resistance due to the nature of the present cultures that are predominantly slow in decision-making due to the hierarchies, committees, adherence to rules and regulations, and the need for consensus. The tardiness slows the process of change thereby not allowing the institution to step ahead of the competition and do so in a timely manner.

Universities face other challenges in the process of changing cultures, for example, the change may not be as forthcoming as is envisaged as there is often resistance from the more mature members of the academy who might prefer the status quo to remain (Davies 2001). Davies (ibid) notes too that the overall traditional tri-mission of universities, which specifies teaching, research, and community service, could also serve as a resistant force to change. This may necessitate changes to include a focus on entrepreneurship to facilitate a shift to an enterprising culture. Davies

(2001) speaks to the need for other changes in the instruments of the 'personal domain' relating to contractual arrangements of the members of the academy to reflect fund-raising as a required role for academic administrators. Some of these changes for academic administrators, he claims, would require changes to the reward and incentive structure, staff development and training opportunities, inclusive of entrepreneurial training, and structured quality time for entrepreneurial activities.

Organizational structures that impose layers of authority between operating units, academic departments, and the strategic centre might also inhibit the change to entrepreneurship. This is due to the creation of distances between the centre, and the action points, i.e., units and departments. This was evident in the study of universities carried out by Clarke (2004) where one university was run by a heavy administrative bureaucratic centre at the top, which stifled and frustrated innovation and new initiatives that was achievable from below.

Case studies conducted by Clarke (2004) in the UK, Latin America, Australia, and the USA indicate the relative intensity of an institution-wide entrepreneurial culture being driven by an on-going competitive thrust for prestige among peers. As greater competitive efforts are made nationally and internationally, more universities are encouraged to be entrepreneurial and as this intensity builds it sets the stage for a cultural transformation. With a culture change, for example, an entrepreneurial



culture change brings with it challenges of sustainability (Clarke 2004) in view of Shattock (2003) suggests that universities first and foremost need to recognize that all activities are interrelated. They also need to be entrepreneurial in academic matters; build structures that support strong academic participation in management; build a partnership of trust between academics and administrators and Universities; and holistically manage the university (Shattock 2003).

In examining the collegial nature of universities, Harvey (1995 a, c) places collegialism on a continuum with “cloisterism” and “new collegialism” at extreme ends. “Cloisterism” he views as staff-directed, producer-oriented, research-dominated and inward-looking, while “new collegialism” is outward-looking, learner-orientated, responsive to change and which might be more supportive of changes to an entrepreneurial culture (Harvey 1995c). As the UWI, Mona Campus embraces an entrepreneurial culture in the drive to finance its operations, “new collegialism might be a transforming idea at this time provided a balance is maintained to sustain its academic stance as is supported by the work of Clarke (1998). Collegiality and entrepreneurship serve useful purposes in higher education with the focus they place on effectiveness and efficiency respectively (Dopson and McNay 1996). This position seems plausible as it not only offers the link between service and standards, whereby the service aims to add value without the generation of profit, but it also offers the institution a balance of operating in the four cultures while recognizing

the benefits that each brings to bear on the institution (Dobson and McNay 1996).

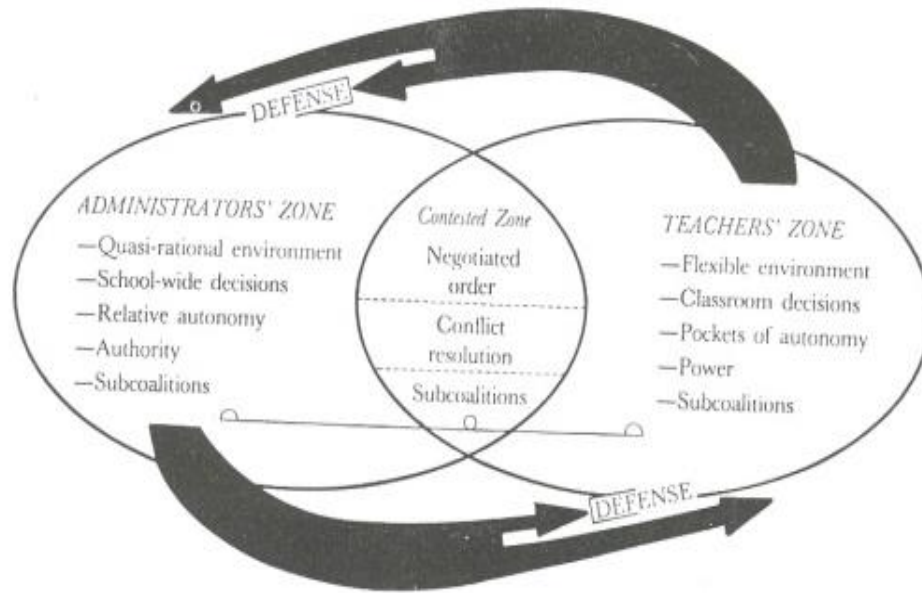
These arguments are based on the assumptions that university culture and structures are homogeneous. But educational organizations are “loosely coupled systems”, described by (Wieck 1976, cited by Hanson 1985) as “coupled events are responsive but that each event also preserves its own identity...(p.110). Hanson (ibid) further notes that units and departments in such a system are mutually responsive and are “interdependent though tied together weakly or infrequently” (p.156). What is therefore required for the fulfillment of the overall purpose in loosely coupled organizations is for different cultures, processes, and structures to operate within the same organization.

Contingency theorists including Lawrence and Lorsch, and Burns and Stalker laid the foundation for describing the kind of organizational structure that illustrates this point. For example, in Burns and Stalker’s (1966) study, which gives a British perspective, two opposing management styles, mechanistic and organic, were identified as existing at opposite ends of a continuum. The mechanistic style, they noted, was more characteristic of Weber’s bureaucratic organization in that it relies on the hierarchy for communication and was more suited for stable and predictable environments. The organic style, on the other hand, was suitable for environments of a changing nature, with communication and

decision making being handled by individuals and points in the system as the situation warrants. Efficient and effective styles of organization and administration are therefore determined by variables such as whether the environmental conditions were stable or instable (Burns and Stalker 1966).

Lawrence and Lorsch's (1969) study offers an understanding of the organizational relationship to the environment from a United States perspective. The study indicates that different types of organizations face different types of environments from uncertain to certain and homogeneous to diverse. The characteristics of these environments therefore call for different types of structures and processes within corresponding organizations (Lawrence and Lorsch 1969), in order to effect "the most efficient form of organization and administration" (Hanson *ibid* p. 159). These two studies support the Interacting Spheres Model (ISM) in Figure 2.2 cited by Hanson (1985).

**Figure 2.2 - Interacting Spheres Model**



Source: *Organizational Behavior in School and School Districts*, edited by Samuel Bacharach, cited in Hanson (1985).

The model presents the interplay of bureaucratization and professionalism in schools that Charles Bidwell (1965) researched and the function of this interaction in governance and decision making. It also illustrates the simultaneous existence and interaction of two different decisional environments: the rational and programmed (administrative) versus the unencumbered and non-prescriptive (teaching staff) and depicts how each supports differing organizational requirements necessary to the purpose of the school.

They argue that these two dominant often interacting spheres of influence are maintained by administrators who are concerned with school-wide

issues, and teachers whose interests are centred on class room issues (Hanson 1985). Loosely coupled systems would therefore need to rely on differing structures in support of these two dominant interacting spheres mainly because

The looseness of system structures and the nature of the teaching task seem to press for a professional mode of school system organization, while demands for uniformity of product and the long time span over which cohorts of students are trained press for rationalization of activities and thus for a bureaucratic base of organization (Bidwell in Hanson 1985, p.98).

In this model, governance and decision-making are separately undertaken by the two dominant spheres of interactions (within their domains), or shared (in the contested zone). When governance and decision-making is shared, it takes the form of negotiations, conflict resolution, and coalitions in the contested zone. It is in this contested zone that a large measure of coupling takes place. For example, Hanson (1985) notes that the Silverwood School District research revealed that the tighter the negotiated order, the tighter the coupling and vice versa, and that this varied with the situation.

The foregoing discussion is developed from contingency theory which offers a contextual approach to the structuring of organizations and stresses that variability in environmental needs and demands requires variability in organizational responses (Hanson *ibid*). Though this research was carried out in elementary, middle, and high schools in the USA, this

ISM model is useful to higher education especially in light of the interactions and supporting relationships that exist between administrators and academics whose interests differ but yet are necessary for the purpose of the institution as a whole. The theory offers educational administration the ability to adapt organizational responses to several different changing situations in the environment and is drawn from ideas in the classical and social systems theories, both of which were designed for the business or industrial organizations (Hanson *ibid*).

Fielden (1990) examines the claim as to whether a transfer of best private practice to the public sector would be easy and practical. He concludes that while some of the principles and practices of the private sector may be relevant to higher education institutions (HEIs), based on the very nature and the culture of HEIs, which is necessary for their continuity (Fielden 1990; Middlehurst 2005), institutional leaders should seek to strike a balance between the two extreme views. One view permits a transfer of private sector management techniques to HEIs, while the other suggests the importance of preserving the creativity and freedoms of HIEs by not tampering too much with their structures and processes (Fielden 1990; Tasker and Packham 1993; Clarke 1998). Harvey (1995b) supports this view that the kind of management thinking should endeavour to support the 'collegialism' concept upon which higher education is built.

Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2002; 2005; 2007) and Houston (2007) justify the importance of due consideration to the nature, purpose, and cultures of universities in the design of any quality framework in higher education. They therefore support the implementation of a generic model of quality that supports the balance of educational, service, and collegial interaction in organizational processes. Such is the culture of universities.

The literature has shown how the culture and structure of an organization, including HEIs, can impede changes that are necessary for success and sustainability. Culture shifts need to be accompanied by flexibility in leadership styles driven from new visions and formulated in new missions to meet the challenges of resource constraints, competition, and accountability (Jarrett 1985). It is to this emphasis on leadership that the subsequent sub-section turns to examine the change process which aims to engender less resistance through the use of change strategies. The role of the leader as the change agent is important in this process.

## **QUALITY LEADERSHIP IN ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE PROCESS**

Research carried out in universities in the United Kingdom concludes that, in addition to the traditional academic and administrative leadership roles of vice-chancellors, their roles took on new meaning as they were expected to lead in governance and management. They and their senior colleagues were expected to think strategically, generate and articulate a vision for the future, and manage change successfully (Smith et al. 1999;

Bargh et al. 1996). This calibre of leadership is necessary to continually drive a quality institution that is striving for academic excellence in a rapidly changing environment. The role of the leader is critical in shaping the process of change in a feasible manner through a thorough assessment of the external environment, and by providing a forum for change to be discussed, understood, debated and implemented (Green 1997; Rogers 1994 in Middlehurst, 1995). Middlehurst based her view of a holistic management approach to forge the link that exists between leadership and quality for institutional effectiveness. She asserts that leadership offers that change towards the pressing issue of quality in higher education while at the same time preserving the essential traditional aspects upon which higher education is founded (Middlehurst 1995)

Dobson and McNay (1996) looked at the changing culture of universities in light of the demands of society and noted the kind of leader that emerged in each culture. Their emphasis is on the 'fit' between the culture and the management style of HEIs to determine whether or not they are successful. This 'fit', they argue, has to take into consideration factors including the purpose of the university, and its present role in a changing environment.

Middlehurst's (1997) emphasis on quality enhancement and quality transformation at the upper ends of the quality continuum generates total transformation. For organizations to operate at these two levels, (Burns



1978; Bass 1985 in Middlehurst and Gordon 1995) put forward that the leadership support must evolve from transactional to transformational; where the transactional leader receives compliance from followers through benefits, while the transformational leader is visionary and inspirational, two necessary traits for changes in attitude and performance. This inspirational and visionary type of leadership (Smith et al. 1999) supports the “appropriateness of the ‘fit’ with the circumstances” (McNay 1995, pp. 105-106).

Change is often met with resistance from major internal actors in the higher education sector, including faculty, who, along with administrators participate in shared governance of the institution (Green and Hayward 1997). Davies (2001) refers to changes in universities over the last two decades that have been as a result of competition and the reduction in government funding. The process of orchestrating changes impacts the leadership and determines the links between leadership and quality in higher education in relation to the change process.

Because changes are inevitable in organizations and more so those operating in turbulent environments (Clarke 2004), as the nature of higher education continues to evolve it will lend to certain anxieties which are often experienced by members who have little or no knowledge of the reasons for change. Change anxieties can be reduced depending on the quality leadership in the process of managing the change and the manner

in which the change process is led and articulated in the culture of the organization (Schein 2004). An effective change process starts with an assessment of where the organization is and where it intends to be. Such an assessment will first indicate the processes by which the culture of an organization evolves and changes as the organization develops, and second, how the leaders influence the change process during the different states of the change evolution (Schein 2004).

Ford et al. (1996) identifies four states in the change management process which involves direction, organization, processes, infrastructure, each of which are iterative and allow for evaluation and review. Any change process is made much easier when it is planned and has the scope to continuously assess and review the needs for, and implications of change. An understanding of how universities change the way they operate is reflected in studies conducted over a two-year period in five countries where it is indicated that changes are made in a cumulative incremental manner beginning with small alterations that lead to qualitative change in organizational character (Clarke 2004). Clarke identified five key elements that reflect the organic flow of a university's internal development: a diversified funding base; a strengthened steering core; an expanded outreach periphery; a stimulated academic heartland; and an integrated entrepreneurial culture.

Bryson (1995) puts forward a comprehensive strategic change cycle, which he states is applicable to both public and private organizations and speaks to the process of strategic change. In his ten-step cycle, emphasis is placed on the process which is all-engaging to build the necessary trust and confidence for effective implementation. Most importantly, Bryson (ibid) emphasizes resource allocation as an integral part of the planning process which impacts on implementation. The cycle is evolutionary, iterative, adaptive, inter-active, flexible, and facilitates a 'best fit' with the dynamic environment within which higher education is being transformed. It looks at strategic issues to meet the challenges aimed at reinventing or re-engineering, competition or collaboration, or total quality management. Other keys to a successful process include the need to prepare the organization for the change, a strengthening of the leadership, assuring participation by key stakeholders, designing a process that is likely to succeed, and managing the process effectively (Bryson 1995).

Organizational culture and tradition can serve as inhibiting factors to change, for example, the earlier sub-section discussed organizations that have operated historically in a bureaucratic mode. These organizations might find it challenging to change especially if these changes are made at the top without the necessary buy-in from other levels. Such a case might require a consistent change management approach over time to permeate the bottom-heavy sections of universities for understanding and action (Shattock 2003).

Clarke (2004) considers the concept of sustainability as an important criterion in any change process. In the context of entrepreneurial change, he makes reference to a university acquiring the right kind of organization that facilitates the institution changing itself and adapting effectively to a changing society. For example, an organization that allows individuals to become more effective and one that encourages change-related attitudes is ideal. The financial domain is considered an important element for sustainability in facilitating academic initiatives and as a means of ensuring accountability throughout the institution (Davies 2001; Shattock 2003; Clarke 2004; Bryson 1995). Without these built-in structures for continuity, changes will not lead to on-going quality improvement, but will instead achieve ‘dramaturgical compliance’ Goffman 1971 cited by Barrow 1999). and thereby allow the institution to subsequently revert to its status quo.

### **THE UWI’S PERSPECTIVES: A Review of UWI’s Internal Documents**

Research into secondary data was necessary in order to corroborate the findings of the literature review. It therefore also formed part of the literature review in order to provide an understanding of the long-term goals and objectives of the UWI, its governance structure, the role of major stakeholders in the operations of the UWI, development of a major

quality initiative, institutional registration and accreditation, and strategic planning.

### **Vision and Mission of the UWI**

A new vision was articulated by the current Vice-Chancellor E. Nigel Harris which was noted in his report to Council in April 1996

My vision [is] for the University to be the first choice of Caribbean nationals seeking high quality undergraduate and graduate education[,] the institution that will be first in providing new knowledge through research contributing to growth, development and transformation of the region; and port of first call for Caribbean governments wishing advice and technical expertise...(p. 3)

This vision is captured in the enduring mission of the UWI (UWI Strategic Plan 2007-2010, pp. 10-13) which is “to propel the economic, social, political and cultural development of the West Indian society through teaching, research, innovation, advisory and community services and intellectual leadership” ( p. 6). The vision speaks to a repositioning of the institution in light of the competitive challenges and seeks to anchor the UWI as the Flagship University of the English Speaking Caribbean. According to the 2007 - 2012 Strategic Plan, over the next five years the vision is expected to be realized through the four core activities of the institution: 1) teaching and learning, 2) graduate studies, 3) research and innovation, and 4) outreach. Transforming the administrative culture and processes of the institution is one of the six priority enablers which were determined to facilitate this realization (pp. 10, 29). To this end, some

student centred approaches have been implemented and are discussed later in the chapter.

### **UWI's Governance Structure**

The UWI inherited a hierarchical yet democratic governance structure from the University of London. This structure encourages consultation and communication through the establishment of major consultative committees and boards. These include a Council, an academic Senate, and faculties, which ensure active representation of all stakeholders on important issues. The original structure which restricted the use of power and control by any one individual stakeholder is still present even though it has seen major modifications.

In 1984, there were modifications to the governance structure which aimed to preserve the regional character of the university, and gave greater autonomy to campuses in order to respond to national needs, as well as the peculiar needs of the non-campus countries. These changes decentralized campus governance, saw the establishment of campus councils, and finance and grants committees on each campus. Out of this decentralization came the concept of the University Centre as distinct from the campuses, which brought with it executive functions for the Vice Chancellor. The University Centre comprises the Vice Chancellor, all Pro Vice Chancellors, and Principals on each of the four campuses, the University Registrar, the University Bursar, and directors involved in

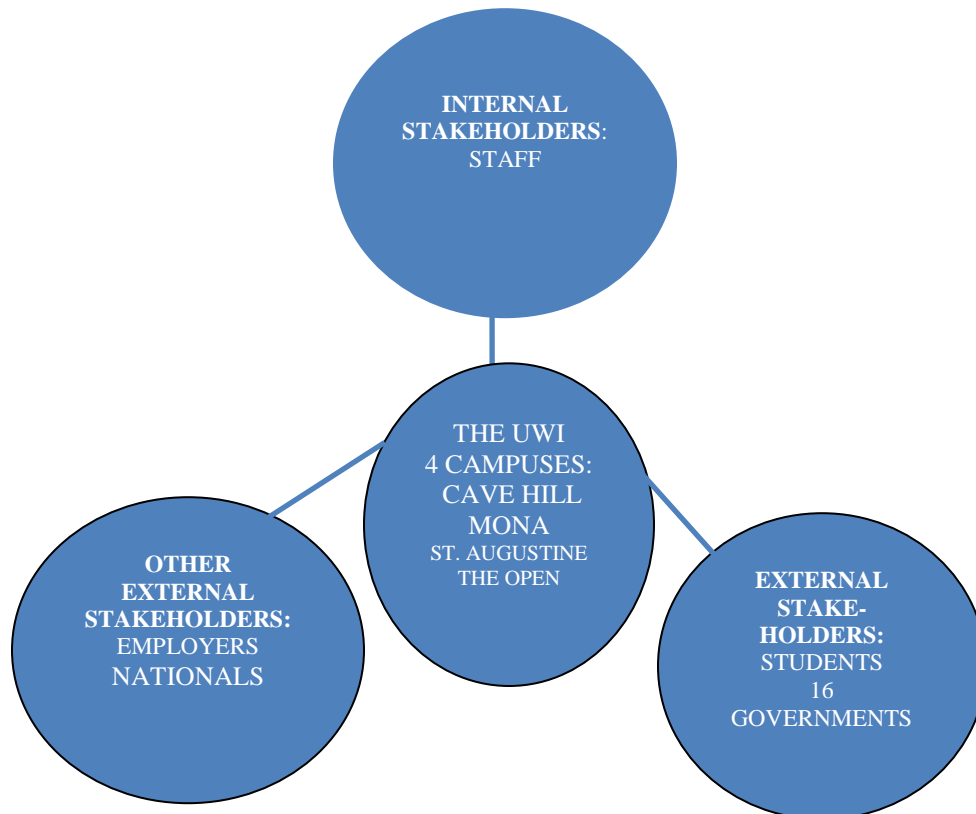
central operations. In 1994, further modifications to the governance structure occurred (see Appendix 1). This time, efforts were made “to streamline the administration of the university, and to bring it in step with current and prospective needs and trends and to improve its effectiveness” (The UWI: A New Structure: The Regional University in the 1990s and Beyond, p.3). Other modifications were made to the structure in 2004, which served to improve the effectiveness of the major organs of governance at both Centre, and Campus levels, and to preserve and strengthen the image and presence of the University in the non-campus countries.

### **Some Major Stakeholders and Their Role in UWI’s Operations**

The governments of the 16 supporting countries, the students and graduates, the employers, and employees are some of the major stakeholders of the UWI. These Caribbean governments were the ones who advocated for the implementation of major changes to be made to the University’s Charter and Statutes in 1972 and the restructuring of the governance of the UWI over the past two decades. The major change, as established previously, was the deepening of the role of the University Council, which is the main policy-making body in the UWI. Its composition includes representation from the 16 Caribbean governments, the public, students, staff, representation of employers, and senior management of the UWI. This body also plays a major role in keeping the

institution focused on responding to the needs of the region. Figure 2.3 below illustrates the UWI's relationship to some of its major stakeholders.

Figure 2.3: **UWI and Some of its Major Stakeholders**



The UWI is constantly researching the experience and perceptions of its stakeholders, including its students, graduates and employers in order to improve practice. These perceptions ascertained are discussed at different levels including Faculty and Academic Boards. Research conducted with some of UWI's major stakeholders includes survey studies in which the Jamaican public shared their perspectives on the work of the UWI and its



institutional standing (Stone 1983; 1985). In the 1985 study, many persons felt that the UWI lags behind in terms of diversify[ing] and broaden[ing] its training offerings in keeping with the expending demands of a constantly changing market for skills and expertise” (p. 40). The 2003 Study indicated that professionals and managers gave a favourable report of UWI’s graduates while recommending that the institution needs to be “reformed to increase the benefits it can bring to the wider society” (p. 38).

Brown and Stewart (2004) were commissioned by the UWI to conduct a *Survey of the Perceptions of Employers of Graduates of the University of the West Indies*. The findings revealed that the employers were mainly concerned about the relevance of the UWI’s programmes to the region. Both positive and negative perceptions were received about UWI’s graduates in terms of their skills, attitudes, and competencies. They were also commissioned to conduct a *Survey of the Perceptions of Final Year Students of the University of the West Indies* in the 2003/2004 Academic Year. The findings of this latter study were similar in some areas to those of the former study, for example, the report indicated that although commendable ratings were received in many areas, “less than satisfactory” ratings were received for areas that students felt were of high importance to their university experience.

The Office of the Board for Undergraduate Studies, the office in which I am employed, and which services the Board for Undergraduate Studies conducted several surveys since 2003. Some of these include *The Survey of the Provisions for Admissions, Registration and Orientation Services at the University of the West Indies – 2003*. This study reported on students' perceptions on the university's performance in the provision of Admissions, Registration and Orientation services to students. It was felt that students were not satisfied with the service offered and the manner in which it was offered. *The Survey of the Perceptions of Final Year Students of the University of the West Indies, on their experiences at the University – 2006* also highlighted, among other things, the need for more efficient customer services at the UWI. Other documents researched was the *Developing the UWI Strategic Plan: The Mona Engagement Response – 2006*, which reported on the responses of members of the University community at Mona, including staff and students, to the challenges facing the UWI. Among the issues identified in this report were those that reflected the need for more student-centred approaches. I also examined the *UWI Strategic Plans – 1997, 2002*, which indicate quality and student-centredness as two strategic objectives. The aim of the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan seeks Strategic Transformation, [of the UWI for] Relevance, Impact, Distinctiveness, and Excellence (p. 2).

The findings from student surveys have played a significant role in the implementation of several quality initiatives at the UWI in general and the Mona campus in particular. These include training in customer service, the implementation of the First and Second Year Student Experiences, the coordination of the activities for commuting students under the direction of a student service manager, improvements to on-line registration through information technology, the establishment of a student administrative system which manages most of the affairs of the Bursary and Registry under one structure, assessment of teaching on a semester basis, and the conduct of customer satisfaction surveys. On-going assessments for faculty, as well as senior administrators are carried out on two fronts: the Deputy Principal and the Human Resources Department. The Deputy Principal has responsibility for the academic operations of the campus, and spearheads surveys that speak to teaching and learning, as well as those that take into consideration the operations of administrative departments. The Human Resources Department, in consultation with heads of administrative and academic departments, carries out annual staff assessments of ancillary, technical and service, and senior administrative and professional staff. The latter group includes faculty and senior administrators. These assessments are used to measure performance based on previously agreed upon objectives.

## **The Development of the Quality Assurance Initiative**

As mentioned earlier, the development and implementation of a Quality Assurance System was the strategy mandated in 1994 to manage quality at the UWI. This internal system was implemented through the Board for Undergraduate Studies, following on the Report on the Chancellor's Commission on the Governance of the UWI in 1996, which aimed to "streamline the administration of the University to bring it in step with current and prospective needs and trends and to improve its effectiveness" (A New Structure: The Regional University in the 1990s and Beyond, p. 3). The new structure (Appendix 1) includes three main boards, each charged with specific responsibilities. One of these boards is the Board for Undergraduate Studies (BUS), charged with the responsibility of assuring quality for all undergraduate, and postgraduate degree programmes (Whiteley, 2002) using a "fitness for purpose" definition, as mentioned previously. By 2001, a Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) was established with offices in each of the three campus countries to effectively manage the process across the entire UWI. This internal system, which mirrors the United Kingdom's Quality Assurance Agency's model of institutional quality assurance, provides the assurance that quality and standards at the UWI are upheld and enhanced.

Though the BUS was mandated to manage academic quality, it has also been instrumental in conducting surveys of the learning environment including Employers Surveys and Student Exit Surveys discussed earlier.

These have been used to inform on the relevance of programmes, the quality of the students produced, and the student-centred services that students demand. These surveys all speak to the need for more quality to be reflected in the administrative processes and systems so that it offers “a more inclusive view of quality to encompass administrative and service areas and so build a community where all members were expected to be engaged in building the UWI as a quality driven institution” (Leo-Rhynie 2003, p. 5). It is to these concerns that this study is addressed as it asks, *“What framework exists in higher education that guides UWI administrators in their approach to quality”*.

#### **INSTITUTIONAL REGISTRATION/ACCREDITATION**

In February 2007, the Mona Campus engaged in the process of evaluation for institutional registration from The University Council of Jamaica. This external accreditation body is charged by the government of Jamaica to register and accredit all post-secondary institutions offering tertiary level services in Jamaica, whether national or international. Similarly, the St. Augustine Campus in Trinidad and Tobago, and the Cave Hill Campus in Barbados have also received registration by their national accreditation agencies. Discussions are in train for the UWI to be accredited by a regional body in the near future. Nonetheless, the quality assurance function continues to remain an important dimension of UWI’s focus. This is expressed clearly in the strategic planning initiatives undertaken by the University since 1997.

## **Strategic Planning at the UWI**

Strategic planning at the UWI was a new initiative in 1997 when the first Strategic Plan was developed and in 2002 a second plan emerged. Prior to these plans, the UWI developed a ten-year developmental plan for the period 1987-1997. For the first time, in 2006, the UWI community witnessed a more effective strategic planning process where members were drawn from a wide cross-section of staff, students, external organizations, and communities were engaged in the process (UWI Strategic Plan 2007-2012, pp. 4-5. Views from these groups were captured in the document *Developing the UWI Strategic Plan: The Mona Engagement Response* (October 2006), which was used to inform the present Strategic Plan for 2007-2012. These engagements helped to determine the four broad strategic foci: 1) teaching and learning, 2) graduate studies, 3) research and innovation and 4) outreach to be achieved over a five-year period. Included in the six priority enablers that were developed to achieve the strategic focus, is the transformation of the administrative culture and processes to which this research lends support. The current Strategic Plan (p 34) reports that “the current administrative culture and processes are not conducive to the excellence that we seek to achieve the core areas of strategic focus set out in this plan” and has the goal to create an administrative culture and system which serves its stakeholders. According to the Strategic Plan, the achievement of this

goal is dependent on three elements: 1) the appointment of a change leader with responsibilities for administrative change; 2) the establishment of a university-wide quality assurance mechanism which would set people-centred standards for learning, working and living within the university, and oversee the implementation of these standards; 3) the appointment of a Pro Vice Chancellor for Planning and Development to ensure that the full human resources, physical infrastructure and finance implications are accounted for when decisions are taken.

The Plan was approved by the UWI Council in May/June 2007 and is described by Vice Chancellor, Professor E. Nigel Harris as transformative as it aims to reposition the UWI as an “innovative, contemporary international university...” (UWIToday, 2007, p.1). The establishment of a new Office of Planning and Development headed by a Pro Vice Chancellor is indicative of the kind of commitment of the UWI to the success of the 2007- 2012 Strategic Plan.

## **SUMMARY**

Three frameworks were examined in this chapter, TQM, LiP, and a generic model. The literature revealed that TQM and LiP share an orientation towards continuous quality improvement with the former being geared towards the use of appropriate management systems and developing attitudes with the customer at the centre of quality, while the latter focuses on people in the achievement of business objectives. These frameworks by

themselves and in the strictest sense do not fully contribute to an approach that takes into account the nature, purpose and culture of higher education (Srikanthan and Dalrymple 2002, 2005, 2007; Houston 2007). Instead, an application of the philosophy of each may best be the answer that might allow administrators in the sector and the UWI in their approach to quality. For example, the emphasis that IiP places on training and development is relevant to the UWI especially as it aims at transforming the present culture to a quality-oriented one through on-going training and development of the human capital. Srikanthan and Dalrymple's (ibid) generic model has more to offer to higher education as it takes into consideration the architecture of traditional universities, while also managing the new context of the universities as business-oriented.

The literature therefore points to two options; one which seeks an appropriate framework that addresses the holistic nature and function of universities through the creation of a generic model, and another, an appreciation of the changing landscape as the context for the framework. The literature emphatically implied that though the higher education landscape has changed, it does not change the traditions of the core functions of teaching, learning and research, but instead has added a new dimension to the support functions. This new dimension is leading to entrepreneurship as a better way of managing the issues of competition and efficiency. Though option one seems to be desired, the appropriate methods, procedures, and tools discussed and justified in Chapter 3 will be



used to ascertain the criteria for administrative quality that is applicable to the context of the UWI.

The literature indicated how the culture of an organization can impede changes urged by the desire to be more competitive. It also showed that organizations exhibit a mix of the four dominant cultures along with varying subcultures and that each of these cultures are affected by different leadership styles based on the context of the situation. The 'fit' between the culture and the leadership style demands a transactional leadership approach. The next chapter will discuss the methodology and methods of the research.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **Problem Statement**

This chapter introduces the research process, which is a qualitative case study. It discusses and justifies the methods, procedures, and tools used to explore the topic. It also carries us through the process of data analysis, beginning with an explanation of the idiographic process that was used and, most importantly, how the data was managed and analyzed. The research is spurred on by expressed concerns from stakeholders of the UWI about issues relating to the delivery of academic and administrative services throughout the institution.

#### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical issues critical to the research process were taken into consideration. The first relates to the conduct of the research at the institution to which I am employed. I was concerned with issues raised in the literature which point to the challenges of studying the context in which you live and work particularly as it relates to the risk to the researcher, the participants, and to the site. It also affects the various roles of the researcher and the confusion that could ensue from these (Cresswell 2007; Glesne and Peshkin 1992; Glesne 1999). In conducting this research at my institution, I was mindful of the associated risks and initially sought to reduce these by excluding from the process those

members of staff with whom I worked closely. Interestingly, during the first level interviews, in which I explored with some participants the frameworks employed at the UWI, I was repeatedly referred to the Office of the Board for Undergraduate Studies, the department to which I am employed as a useful site to investigate. In reviewing the literature, I was sensitized to the issues of studying in my own institution and so exercised particular caution during the interviews, following careful selection of interviewees. For example, I selected a member of staff in my office based on a specific area of responsibility.

Other ethical considerations were taken into account before and during the data collection phase. I submitted two formal letters to each participant: one from the Director of the Doctor of Business Administration, Higher Education Management Programme at the University of Bath, verifying that I am a registered doctoral student (see Appendix 2) and the other letter, along with consent forms, was sent to invite and inform participants (see Appendices 3 and 4):

- a) of the purpose and objectives of the research
- b) to give assurances of confidentiality and anonymity
- c) to explain the importance of receiving written consent from interested staff members and students to ensure voluntary participation
- d) to submit interview schedules (Appendices 5, 6 and 7) to participants ahead of the interview

## RESEARCH STRATEGY

The research question “What *administrative framework exists in higher education that guides how UWI administrators approach quality?*” sought to find out what such a framework would look like, and how it would articulate with the established academic quality assurance system. It determined the strategy and advanced the development of substantive aims. From the aims, four sub-research questions were developed. The questions required the collection of evidence from senior executive management, other senior administrators in central and campus administration, academic departments, faculty, and students in order to:

1. Determine whether an identifiable higher education framework exists at the UWI that guides administrators
2. Determine whether the framework indicated is applicable (workable)
3. Evaluate the extent to which the management style and culture as a whole affect administrative quality
4. Determine what university administrators and customers (students) see as the criteria for administrative quality

Qualitative research relies on interpretive or critical approaches to social science, applies logic in practice, and follows a nonlinear research path. It also calls for the use of soft data, in the form of impressions, words, sentences... “as against ‘hard data’ in the form of numbers” (Neuman 2003, pp. 139). These considerations pointed me to the use of a case study as the appropriate research method, which allowed for a detailed

examination of the specific context. The use of a qualitative strategy further impacted on the data collection techniques that I employed, for example, it was important that I used multiple data collection sources for validity purposes. I conducted 28 one-to-one elite interviews with four different levels of staff, two focus group studies comprising 20 full-time undergraduate and postgraduate students across five faculties, and documentary research of pertinent institutional studies, as well as other internal documentation.

## **RESEARCH PROCEDURE**

A single case study with three embedded units of analysis (Yin 1994) or subunits or subcases (Merriam 1998) was designed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved which can influence policy, practice, and future research, as suggested by Merriam (1998). The choice of a single case was the desired option as it facilitated an exploration of the phenomenon at greater depth as against breadth, than had multiple campuses, and/or multiple institutions been studied (Merriam 1998). The type of questions also determined the research strategy (Yin 1994). For example, when we pose questions of “how” and “why” we allow for explanation, exploration, and evaluation. These were seen as appropriate in understanding “how” and “why” the administrative framework of quality at UWI works, or does not work. A further consideration was what data was relevant to be collected, and how the results would be analyzed. The case study methodology was

useful in allowing for an understanding of the wholeness and unity of the phenomena, in its natural setting, recognizing its complexity and its context (Yin 1994; Merriam 1998). This in-depth case study methodology allowed for “interpretation in context” so that I was able “to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the...[three embedded cases] under study” and make “general theoretical statements about regularities in social structure and process” (Cronbach 1975; Becker 1968 cited by Merriam 1998, p.29).

### **Research Design**

Figure 3.1 on page 79 illustrates the research design as a flourishing tree that bears year round; this suggests sustainability of the processes and procedures of administrative quality that are continuous and on-going. The tree is the generative metaphor for the research process undertaken here and from which I derived other sustaining metaphors. The following four research sub-questions were deeply rooted in the search to find answers to the thesis question:

1. Is there a framework in higher education that guides UWI  
UWI administrators in their approach to quality?
2. How applicable is this framework?
3. To what extent does the management style and culture as a  
whole affect administrative quality?
4. What do university administrators and customers (students) see  
as the criteria for administrative quality?

Each branch of the tree, beginning from the lowest to the highest, depicts the different stages in the research process and ends with the recommendations which points to the way forward as a result of the findings.

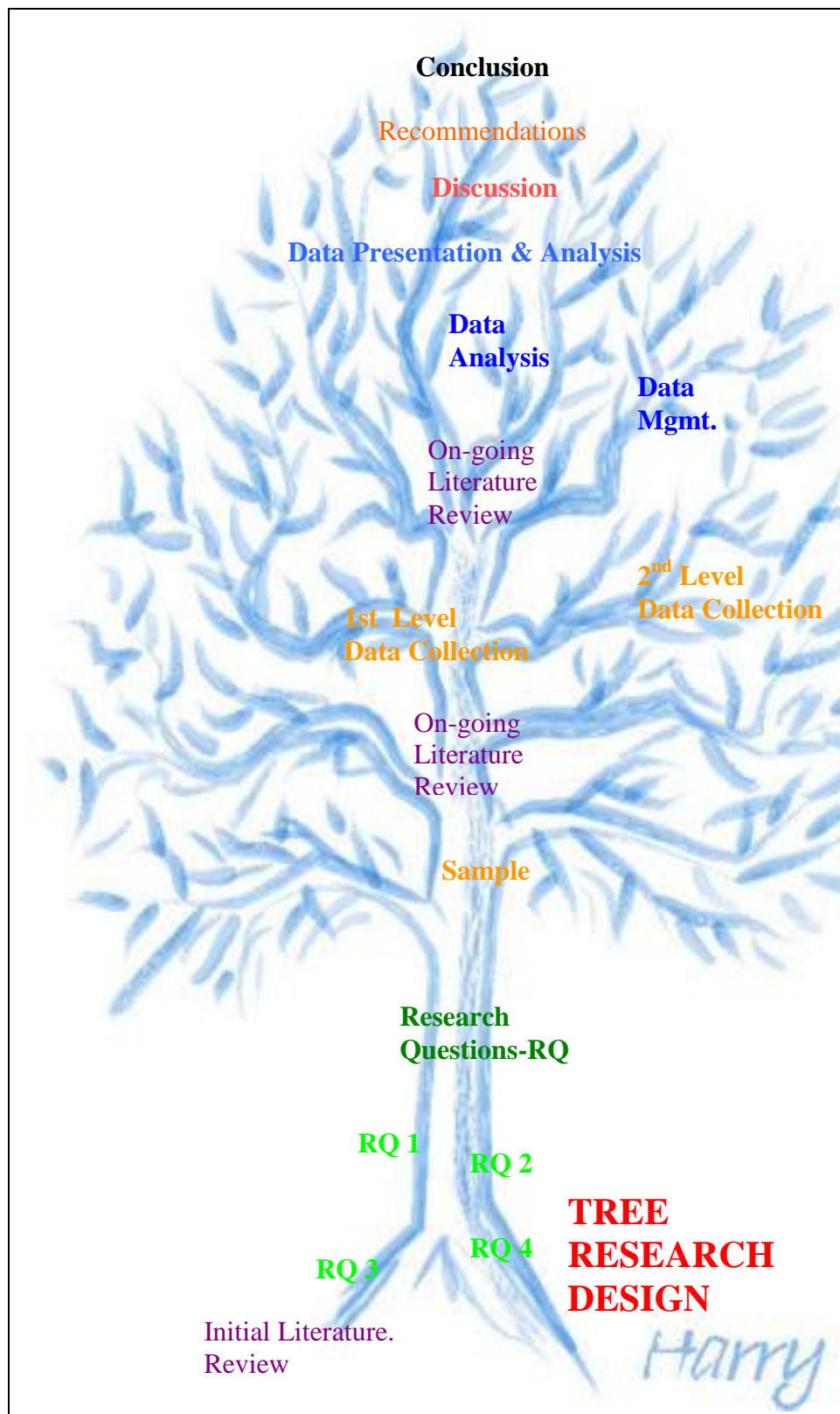


Figure 3:1: Research Design

Source: Minimal tree by Harry. Available from

[Http://z.about.com/d/graphicssoft/1/0/n/0/2/tree/DP8.2.jpg](http://z.about.com/d/graphicssoft/1/0/n/0/2/tree/DP8.2.jpg);  
October 2009



## **SAMPLING**

I chose a “purposeful” sample (Patton 1990, p. 169) of 28 “key informants” and two focus groups of 20 full-time students. The sample of key informants was selected on the basis of their roles in leading and directing the vision and mission of the institution, developing and implementing policy decisions, and managing and guiding staff and student affairs. Patton (1990) refers to key informants as the best sample for “elite” interviews. The sample comprised members of senior executive management, senior administrative and professional staff, academic, and senior administrators in academic departments. This sample size was sufficient to capture the views and perceptions of a cross-section of university administrators and academics thereby allowing me to efficiently explore and evaluate administrative quality frameworks. The focus groups consisted of a “maximum variation sample” as discussed by (Glaser and Strauss 1967, cited by Merriam 1998, p. 62) of students from across the four faculties on the basis that they would be in a position to give their perspective on the quality of service received through administrative procedures and processes. The participants in this research were therefore able to share different experiences of the administrative system while contributing to a comprehensive vision -some as policy makers, others as implementers, or users.

### **The Research Setting: seeing the leaves on the tree**

Research in my own backyard on the Mona branch of the UWI afforded me the opportunity to interact with senior administrators and academics with whom I have worked with for many years and even persons who are positioned much higher in the organization than I am (see Table 3.2).

**Table 3.2: INTERVIEW MATRIX**

| <b>Staff Category</b>          | <b>1<sup>st</sup> Level interviews</b> | <b>2<sup>nd</sup> level interviews</b> |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Senior Management              | 3                                      | -                                      |
| Senior Administrators          | 10                                     | 3                                      |
| Senior Academic Administrators | 4                                      | 2                                      |
| Academics                      | 6                                      | -                                      |

For example, I met with some members of senior executive management. This category is comprised of the vice chancellor, pro-vice-chancellors, principal, deputy principal, registrars, bursars, and directors. Smith et al. (1999) describe this group of leaders as chief executive officers, who manage strategically, are involved in policy and decision-making, and generate and articulate the vision for universities. In addition, I met with members of senior administrative and professional staff, who are heads/assistant heads of administrative departments/units whose substantive roles serve to support senior management in implementing the rules of governance, as well as in supporting policy decisions for the teaching and research dimensions of the institution. Members of staff in

these two categories were drawn from University Centre and campus administration.

Other participants in my study were drawn from academics, senior lecturers/lecturers whose core responsibility is teaching and research. The fourth category of staff were senior administrators in academic departments who operate as deans, associate/deputy/sub deans, heads of academic departments, and directors who have dual roles of teaching and administration. Academics and academic administrators in my sample are from the faculties of Humanities and Education, Social Sciences, Pure and Applied Science, and Medical Sciences, some of whom are engaged in research. As a member of the senior administrative and professional staff, I found it easy to interact with these administrators who were eager and willing to participate in the study and a few used the opportunity to express general concerns about the institution. It was also easy to talk with staff members in the academic departments and faculties, some of whom were instrumental in my undergraduate and postgraduate academic experience at the UWI.

My interaction with these familiar faces took the form of interviews and informal talks. Interviews with participants were conducted during the regular work day in the comfort of their offices. In a few cases, arrangements were made for our conversation to take place in conference rooms. Interacting with participants in the privacy of their offices was a

learning experience for me as I was better able to absorb and analyze the settings of the different worlds in which they worked and this experience helped me to define and assess the participants.

I invited undergraduate and postgraduate students in the faculties of Humanities and Education, Law, Medical Sciences, Pure and Applied Sciences, and Social Sciences to participate in the two focus group studies (see Table 3.3). They were eager and were happy for the opportunity to share their overall perceptions of the UWI, to the extent that they were very instrumental in referring me to other students whom they felt would also be interested in participating in the study.

**Table 3.3: FOCUS GROUP MATRIX**

| Faculty                           | Undergraduate        |                      |                      |                      | Postgraduate         |                      |                      |                      |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
|                                   | Full-time            |                      | Part-time            |                      | Full-time            |                      | Part-time            |                      |
| <b>Humanities &amp; Education</b> | <b>M</b><br><b>1</b> | <b>F</b><br><b>1</b> | <b>M</b><br><b>-</b> | <b>F</b><br><b>-</b> | <b>M</b><br><b>1</b> | <b>F</b><br><b>1</b> | <b>M</b><br><b>-</b> | <b>F</b><br><b>-</b> |
| <b>Law</b>                        | <b>1</b>             | <b>-</b>             | <b>-</b>             | <b>-</b>             | <b>-</b>             | <b>-</b>             | <b>-</b>             | <b>-</b>             |
| <b>Pure &amp; Applied</b>         | <b>1</b>             | <b>-</b>             | <b>-</b>             | <b>-</b>             | <b>-</b>             | <b>1</b>             | <b>-</b>             | <b>-</b>             |
| <b>Medical Sciences</b>           | <b>2</b>             | <b>3</b>             | <b>-</b>             | <b>-</b>             | <b>-</b>             | <b>-</b>             | <b>-</b>             | <b>-</b>             |
| <b>Social Sciences</b>            | <b>2</b>             | <b>6</b>             | <b>-</b>             |                      | <b>-</b>             | <b>-</b>             | <b>-</b>             | <b>-</b>             |

The conduct of semi-structured one-to-one elite interviews with staff members and group interviews with students in focus groups enriched my

data as these participants were given the opportunity to share their general experiences, as well as the specific experiences that I sought from them.

### **Data Collection**

A number of data collection techniques were undertaken: one-to-one elite interviews, focus group studies, and documentary research. This was possible as “case study does not claim any particular methods for data collection or data analysis” (Merriam 1998, p. 28). Multiple data-collection methods were also used for triangulation which provided corroborating evidence (Glesne & Peshkin 1992; Merriam 1988; Miles & Huberman 1994), contributed to the trustworthiness of the data, and added to its richness (Glesne 1999). Data collection was conducted on two levels. The first level was exploratory and sought answers from 23 participants as to whether higher education frameworks exist at the UWI that guide university administration, and, if so, what these frameworks looked like. The second level of the data collection process was evaluative and sought answers from five other participants as to whether the frameworks identified by the first level participants were indeed their perceptions as well and, if so, whether or not they were functional. The process began when I conducted five one-to-one interviews with administrators and academics and carried out an initial data analysis. This analysis was done to assess how well the information I sought was answered. It also allowed my own understanding of the process to deepen. I continued the first level interviews during which some

participants were instructive in identifying other colleagues whom they felt would be “information-rich informants” (Patton 1990, cited by Merriam 1998, p. 61) and these persons were invited to participate. After conducting one-to-one interviews over a three week period, I carried out a second initial data analysis which allowed me to reflect on the existing data and to generate strategies for collecting new and better data (Miles and Huberman 1994). First and second level interviews were continued over a six-month period until the sample size was attained. My data collection process is outlined in Table 3.4 below.

**Table 3.4: Data Collection Process**

| <b>Year 1</b>  | <b>Year 2</b>                          |
|--|--|
| <b>July – December 2007</b>                              | <b>May 2008</b>                        |
| 28 One-to-one Interviews<br>(Administrators/Academics)   | 2 Focus Group Studies<br>(20 Students) |
| Exploratory      Evaluative<br>23                      5 | Exploratory<br>20                      |
| <b>July – December 2007</b>                              | <b>January – December, 2008</b>        |
| Internal Document<br>Research                            | Internal Document<br>Research          |

## **RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

Interview and focus group schedules (see Appendices 5 to 7) guided the research questions and aimed at asking participants to reconstruct their experience to enable me to explore their meanings (Glesne and Peskin 1992; Seidman 1991). In designing the research questions, I was mindful that the very first question on administrative frameworks could

prove difficult as very often an approach or a framework is employed in everyday practice without workers necessarily being aware of it as part of a framework. I therefore prepared myself to discuss some examples of higher education frameworks, for example, TQM and IiP after posing this question. If even after an explanation of these, answers were not readily forthcoming, I asked administrators and academics to explain to me what actually guided them in their everyday operations.

In discussing this question with the students, I not only described these higher education frameworks but I also listed the tenets in written format on a whiteboard. They were then invited to indicate whether they felt that any of these existed in any of the operations during their student life-cycle, which I explained begins at the application, through to admission, registration, examination, and graduation stages. This method not only provided me with some amount of structure, but also served to corroborate other institutional studies previously carried out which targeted the effectiveness of the operations in some of these processes. I frequently probed the responses of participants and this was useful in capturing the full experiences and meanings as was necessary. I, as the “instrument” of data collection, could be responsive to the context, thereby probing for further follow-up (Merriam 1998, p.83). Of the three data collection techniques employed, the one-to-one elite interviews and the focus group studies were the main techniques used.

## **Semi-structured Interviews**

A semi-structured interview was used to allow for “questions that are more flexibly worded” and included a mix of structured and open-ended questions (Merriam 1998, p. 74; Malseed 1987, cited in Pawson 1996, p. 299). These researchers discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the structured and unstructured types of interviews and, based on the purpose of each, offer the view that the structured approach is useful for factual information, while the unstructured is useful for an interpretative approach. I opted for Malseed’s (ibid) suggestion of the pluralist “midway compromise” of the semi-structured interview which offered respondents a chance to discuss in detail their answers from which comparable and rich meaningful data ensued. The interview therefore allowed me to obtain special kinds of information such as people’s behaviours, feelings, and interpretations of the world around them, and allowed me to glean what is “in and on someone else’s mind” by allowing me to enter into the other person’s perspective (Merriam 1998, pp. 71-72; Patton 1990, cited by Merriam 1998, p.196). As discussed by Etherington (2004), I too was able to remain close to the data through the process of leading all 28 interviews and the focus group, as well as by carrying out the actual transcription of a large number of the interviews supported by audio recordings. In this way, I was also able to pick up and note nuances, hesitations, pauses, emphasis, expressions or any additional gesture that seemed important (Etherington 2004). The



interviews were found to be useful for case study investigations, and also to examine historical events that cannot be replicated (Yin 1994).

### **The Research Questions**

Strauss outlines four types of questions that are useful in designing an interview schedule: 1) hypothetical questions, 2) ideal position questions, 3) interpretative questions, 4) devil's advocate questions (Straus et al. 1981, cited by Merriam, 1990, p. 77). Three of the four categories of questions were useful for this research. For example, hypothetical questions were useful in asking respondents to "speculate as to what" they felt are the criteria for administrators' approach to quality at the UWI. Some ideal position questions served to "elicit both information and opinion and proved useful in examining the "positives and the negatives or shortcomings" of the frameworks employed at the UWI, especially in regards to the follow-up question of whether or not these frameworks worked and why or why not. The interpretative questions sought reactions to earlier interpretations of frameworks identified by one set of participants thereby serving as "a check on what you think you are understanding". The use of the Devil's advocate questions was not thought to be useful in this study as they are better suited for more controversial topics.

Other advantages of interviews included the flexibility, and cost-effectiveness it afforded me. One main disadvantage of interviewing is

that it is an interaction and what is assessed is what is heard from respondents (Neuman 2003). I was mindful of this and employed Miles' and Huberman's (1994) critical data management procedures which enabled me to focus not only on what meanings were achieved, but also on how these meanings were achieved by analyzing what people talk about in abstract. Employing listening skills also allowed me to note silences, understand the implied and not just what was explicitly said (Guba and Lincoln 1981, cited by Merriam 1998).

### **Focus Group Study**

Focus group studies were undertaken with the aim of providing insights into how people perceive a situation (Kreuger 1994, cited by Parker and Titter 2006). Initially, I intended to undertake three focus group studies inclusive of full-time and part-time, undergraduate, and postgraduate students but in the end only two were conducted with a purposive sample of full-time undergraduate and postgraduate students, which generated in-depth exploration (Stewart and Shamdasani 1990, cited by Parker and Titter 2006). I found it difficult to organize enough part-time students to meet in one setting for a focus group study as their schedules differed to a great extent. The students in this sample were representative of students in the five faculties on the Mona campus who shared in common, investments in higher education and wished to benefit from a more efficient administrative service delivery. The researcher, on the

other hand, was interested in evaluating this delivery, hence the focus on frameworks and on the criteria for administrative quality.

The focus group interviews allowed me to question systematically and simultaneously several individuals (Babbie 2004). Views and interactions were elicited from the students in these groups with a view to seeking their contribution for an understanding of the phenomenon (Merriam 1998). Patton (1990) highlights the usefulness of the focus group interview for evaluative purposes, which justifies my stance as an evaluator. Another useful purpose of the focus group study was that it served to assist me in purposive sampling which proved useful as during the interview respondents were asked who else they perceived as useful to be included in the study and some of these persons were included in the second focus group study. Another advantage of focus group studies was the access it provided to meet with different groups of persons in one setting, the access to interactions, and the cost effectiveness (Parker et al. 1998 cited, by Babbie 2004). I played the role of facilitator and moderator which encouraged the participants to open up to me as a group. (Kitzinger 1994a; Johnson 1996; Bloor et al. 2001, cited by Parker and Tritter 2006; Punch 1998).

### **Interview versus Questionnaire**

The main advantage that the interview has over the questionnaire is the interaction it provided between an interviewer and a respondent (Babbie

2004), which allows for probes, explanations, and clarification of responses. He also explained that the interview facilitates the interpretation of meanings from the behaviour and feelings of the interviewer. Other advantages include the flexibility, and cost-effectiveness that it afforded. In the case of the focus group interview, the group dynamics frequently brought out aspects of the topic that would not have been anticipated by the researcher and would not have emerged from interviews with individuals (Krueger 1988, cited by Babbie 2004).

The questionnaire as a technique was therefore not considered an option as it presented a limitation in terms of flexibility of questions, and lacked the one-to-one interaction with participants. It is for these reasons that the interview was the primary instrument used in data collection.

### **Documentary Research**

Documentary research provided secondary data. The review of internal official documents served to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources (Yin 1994). Silverman (2000, cited by Denzin and Lincoln 2000) cites other writers in support of the view that small numbers of texts and documents may be analysed in order “to understand the participants’ categories and to see how these are used in concrete activities such as telling stories” (Propp 1968 and Sacks 1974, cited by Denzin and Lincoln 2000, p.826), and “assembling files” (Cicourel 1968;

Gubriaum and Buckholdt 1982, cited by Denzin and Lincoln 2000, p.826). I, too, felt propelled to examine these in detail, as Bogden and Biklen (2003) put forward, especially those referred to by participants and identified by them as frameworks. Access to these internal documents was readily available and participants not only made reference to them, but also willingly offered them and/or indicated where they could be located. In addition to the ease of access to documents, the Mona Campus, as the site for the research, also proved advantageous with respect to the ease of access to individuals who willingly gave of their time. These advantages made the research process less time-consuming.

The matrix in Table 3.5 on page 93 shows the relationship between the research issues, four research questions, data sources, and data collection techniques.

**Table 3.5: Relationship between issues, research questions, data sources and data collection techniques**

| <b>Issues and Related Research Questions (RQ)</b>  | <b>Data Sources</b>   | <b>Data Collection Techniques</b>   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Issue 1: HE frameworks</b><br><br>RQ 1: Is there a framework in HE that guides UWI administrators in their approach to quality?   | Senior Executive Management,<br>Senior Administrators,<br>Senior academic administrators,<br>Faculty,<br>Students | Interviews<br>Documentary research<br>Audio/digital recording<br>Focus groups |
| <b>Issue 2: Working frameworks</b><br><br>RQ 2: How applicable is this framework?  | Senior Executive Management,<br>Senior Administrators,<br>Senior academic administrators,<br>Faculty,<br>Students | Interviews<br>Documentary research<br>Audio/digital recording<br>Focus groups |
| <b>Issue 3: Management Style &amp; Culture –impact on frameworks</b><br><br>RQ 3: To what extent does the overall management style and culture affect administrative quality | Senior Executive Management,<br>Senior Administrators,<br>Senior academic administrators,<br>Faculty,<br>Students | Interviews<br>Documentary research<br>Audio/digital recording<br>Focus groups |
| <b>Issue 4: Criteria for administrative quality</b><br><br>RQ 4: What do administrators and students see as the criteria for administrative quality?                         | Senior Executive Management,<br>Senior Administrators,<br>Senior academic administrators,<br>Faculty,<br>Students | Interviews<br>Audio/digital recording<br>Focus groups                         |

## **THE PROCESS OF DATA ANALYSIS**

As other researchers have noted, there is no clear distinction between the start and end processes of data collection, data analysis, and report writing as they often go on simultaneously (Cresswell 2007; Marshall and Rossman 1999). These processes are best illustrated with the use of Cresswell's (2007) Data Analysis Spiral. The spiral consists of four loops which intersect at points to reflect circular movements beginning with data management as the initial process of data analysis. In interpreting and trying to make sense of the data, I too became aware that there was no particular moment when data analysis begins as it goes on and on.

### **Data Management**

Data management represents the initial phase of the data analysis process (Miles and Huberman 1994; Creswell 2007). In this phase an integral relationship exists between data management and data analysis resulting in unfixed boundaries (Miles and Huberman 1994). Miles and Huberman describe several useful procedures in the employment of structural forms for managing data and which proved helpful in this research. I conducted the process of data analysis throughout the data collection exercise. The process deepened as I engaged in the management of the data that I collected using four processes: Interview Research Logs, Contact Summary Forms, and Document Summary Forms which Miles and Huberman referred, and a Comprehensive Matrix which I designed to

capture the responses of all participants. These four processes incorporated five general principles in the storage and retrieval process for manual data manipulation.

I, increasingly, became familiar with the data in intimate ways during the data management process, which began with the creation of an *Interview Research Log* for each participant. This was prepared after the actual interviews and included verbatim transcription of recorded interviews, and also provided a useful database for analysis (Merriam 1998). *Contact Summary Forms* were prepared after field contacts which captured the main issues or themes in each contact, for example, summaries of responses to each of the four target questions, other important points in the contact, and, upon reflection, new or remaining questions for the next contact, as Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest. The preparation of these two documents informed the *Document Summary Forms*, which allowed for notations of pertinent documents referred to by participants, as well as the significance of each, and summaries of what the documents contain. Provision was made in these documents for identification of each contact visit, site location, and an account of the researcher's reflections.

The final and critical document in the management of data was the *Comprehensive Matrix* compiled for all respondents, which identified themes, texts, locator details, and my comments. It was important for me to prepare a *Comprehensive Matrix* as illustrated in Table 3.5 as it



facilitated the commencement of advanced data analysis especially during the initial data collection exercise. The information contained in the matrix is an example of responses to the three themes from my “model” transcript, Mary’s transcript, which is discussed in the next sub-section.

**Table 3.6: COMPREHENSIVE MATRIX**

| <b>THEMES</b>                                       | <b>TEXT</b>   | <b>LOCATOR #</b>                          | <b>COMMENTS</b>  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>SUPERORDINATE</b><br>Higher Education Frameworks | “I am not able to say that the University system falls into any of these...we’ve sort of adopted an approach without formalizing it”              | T1PER,p1,L 19-25                          | No Higher Education framework identified                   |
| <b>SUBORDINATE</b><br>Implementation of Framework   | “...in 1999....the Customer Care Charter was developed...it is a formal document now approved by F&GPC...”  | T1PER, p4.L153-157, 164, 192-193, 198-199 | The Customer Care Charter is a standards-based document    |
| <b>ADDITIONAL/ UNEXPECTED</b><br>Lack of Monitoring | “... we have to go back to a culture of monitoring... and retrain [ing]‘nipping the bud’ so that any inclination to revert to the old culture...” | T1PER, p12,L510-13                        | No monitoring system in place. This affects implementation |

This 4 x 4 *Comprehensive Matrix* was compiled for all respondents and assisted me in further data analysis as it captured the responses of each respondent in one document. In designing this matrix, I too, like Miles and Huberman (1994), experienced the ease that it afforded me in further data analysis as the data were reduced to manageable forms. The matrix comprises four horizontal rows which allowed for the identification of themes, text, locator/pagination details, and comments of the researcher. These data management documents were labelled and filed. Similarly, the audio and digital recordings were labelled and stored on audio tapes, CDs and hard drives as part of the data management storing exercise.

I applied simple coding which allowed for the identification of the text, contact, page number, and line(s) of 'in vivo' quotes in the *Comprehensive Matrix*, for example, the codes: T1PERp1,L6 refer to text 1, contact made in a particular department, page 1, line 6. This *Comprehensive Matrix* facilitated the commencement of advanced data analysis during and after the data collection exercise as I was able to explore similarities and differences. Further identification of relationships, descriptions, classifications, and interpretations were carried out in this phase, representative of the fourth phase in the Data Analysis Process. As the analysis process deepened, it was important to be able to easily identify any similarities and differences in the emerging themes and patterns for each category of respondent so the *Comprehensive Matrix* was further separated to reflect the views of the five categories described earlier.

### **Ideographic Approach to Data Analysis**

I employed Smith et al's (1995a) idiographic analysis cited by Smith et al. (1995) because it allowed me to focus on what is unique about each participant in the study, and the management practice of an educational institution, which was the object of my study. Therefore, my approach to data analysis was different from what obtained in the literature from the field of educational institutional management as, rather than only asking what cases have in common, I also examined their differences.

The ideographic approach to data analysis was useful because it helped me to develop deeper understandings of the perceptions of "Mary", the participant in my first interview. I used Mary's transcript as the starting point in my analysis because I felt it was the best in terms of the clear and detailed answers that I received and the depth of understanding that she afforded me to garner from the process. Thus, I refer to this transcript as my "model" transcript and so I analyzed it first. I used the "model" transcript to identify the initial patterns, themes, and codes. These themes, patterns, and codes were peer reviewed and when I was comfortable with them I used them to guide the analysis of the remaining twenty nine interview transcripts.

## **Establishing the Analysis Model**

As I explained before, data analysis began with the organization and examination of the transcript of an interview with Mary. First, I used a word processor to insert line numbers to the left of every sentence in the transcript. Next I read through it and made copious notes in the right margins. I also circled and labelled sections of paragraphs, sentence and even words. When that aspect of the process ended, I felt even more confused than I was at the beginning as I had an additional layer of text from which no immediate meanings were forthcoming. I realized at this point that I needed to find a way to group like ideas into meaningful chunks. I sought the literature on data analysis and referred to the work of Miles and Huberman (1994), who advised that the novice researcher should create a researcher log. I developed such a log and used it to record salient themes and codes that emerged from my model transcript. I even highlighted in different colours these salient themes and codes that emerged. This made the process less unwieldy and gave me a sense of control over the data.

I learnt from my interaction with the data in Mary's transcript that I needed to prepare an *Interview Research Log*, as described earlier, for each participant. This log included all themes and codes that enabled me to locate important verbatim quotations in each transcript. These quotations allowed for a better understanding of what each participant said, and how they said it (Bogan and Biklen 2003). Preparing these logs

made the process more systematic and enabled me to use the information in this log to create a *Contact Summary Form* for this participant. Doing this was helpful as it captured the main issues in the transcript, summarised the responses to each research question, and any new ideas that emerged that merited further reflection.

The process of preparing the *Contact Summary Forms* highlighted to me how integrally related the data management and data analysis processes were, as described by (Wolfe 1992 and Levine 1985, in Miles and Huberman (1994). I was unable to extract meanings from the data in the early stages of analysis as there was no structure or process. The *Researcher Log* provided both organization for my data and a structure to manage the themes and codes that emerged from Mary's transcript, and the *Contact Summary Form*. I subsequently used the information in the *Contact Summary Form* to create a *Document Summary Form*. This form contained information about the ideas that were important to Mary and the themes and codes that those ideas supported. I also ensured, as I prepared the *Document Summary Form*, that I made notes of all documents that Mary made reference to, the significance that she ascribed to them, and notes about what the documents contained. I later accessed and read these documents in order to verify the accuracy of the information that the informant shared.

The model transcript (Mary's transcript) formed the early stages of analysis and set the stage for analysis of the remaining data as I replicated the approach to analysis, and used the same themes and codes to analyze the remaining data set. This provided me with consistency, multiple opportunities to immerse myself in the analysis processes, a unique way to verify ideas that emerged repeatedly, and to note concepts that rarely re-occurred. I found engaging in this kind of recursive analysis on such a large data set to be extremely time consuming. The advantage is that it forced me to fully immerse myself in reading the transcripts repeatedly and listening to the tapes, which brought back vivid memories of the fieldwork and made me feel, on many occasions, that I was still engaged in the actual interview process. I was able to visualize the respondents coming alive in the interviews as I recalled Mary's expressions of anxiety, apathy, and concern. This visualization allowed me to reflect and write notes, ideas, and key concepts in the margins of the transcripts since I actually "heard" what the participants said. As I analysed the next four transcripts the understanding of the process deepened. The nature of the phenomena being researched at UWI, Mona Campus, was much clearer. Therefore the third round of this data spiral felt more like a process of data archiving as I began to develop a better sense of the experiences of each participant in this institution and I was able to use these emerging interpretations to create a framework of management that I felt could help this institution to improve administrative efficacy.

## **Replicating the Model**

### **Thematic Analysis**

As mentioned earlier, an initial thematic analysis was carried out after the conduct of five first-level interviews. This afforded me the opportunity to reflect on the existing data and to develop strategies for collecting new and better data. A second analysis was carried out after the conduct of seven other first-level interviews. After exploring the research questions with eighteen first-level respondents, it was important to evaluate these initial findings, so five second-level interviews were conducted with representatives from each of the four levels of staff in the sample. The exploration and evaluation processes allowed for triangulation and some amount of corroboration. Further analysis was undertaken at the end of the data collection exercise and three themes were identified. These are the superordinate, subordinate, and additional and salient themes that emerged.

### **Superordinate Themes**

The superordinate themes are straightforward and represent the four main research questions. These determined whether frameworks in higher education exist at the UWI; the applicability of such frameworks; the effects of the management style and culture of the UWI on the administrative frameworks identified; and the criteria for a framework that was suitable and sustainable for the UWI. Responses to these four

research questions were the major patterns in the data which represented practical findings.

### **Subordinate Themes**

Subordinate themes are the sub-research questions which give support to the superordinate themes. These were identified as issues concerning the implementation of the frameworks such as distinctiveness, timeframe, involvement, for whom the framework worked, the strengths, weaknesses, accomplishments, challenges, assumptions of the frameworks, and the clients of these frameworks. Other subordinate themes probed the compatibility of the management styles identified with the approach to administrative quality; the fit between administrative framework and the culture; the ideal culture to sustain an administrative framework of quality for the users; the impact of framework identified, i.e., the intended/unintended effects; and the ideal framework for the UWI.

### **Additional, Salient, and Emerging Themes**

The additional, salient and other emerging themes were embedded in the responses to the superordinate and subordinate themes and enriched the meanings of those themes. These include: ownership of quality, staff hierarchy, the blurring of roles, administrative/academic role shifts. From the theme ownership of quality, other sub-themes emerged, including issues of communication or the lack of it, resistance to changes, implementation and monitoring, training and development.



## Coding

Further analysis was carried out with the application of codes at two levels to the data. This process represented the third phase in the Data Analysis Process. First-level coding was descriptive and involved refinement of themes, and initial interpretation of data (Creswell 2007). The application of these codes followed active reading and re-reading of the various texts which allowed me to explore descriptions of single key terms, events and actions identified as was discussed by Miles and Huberman (1994). These codes were applied to salient points in the data and these were placed in the *Contact Summary Form*, for example, the codes, “Comm”, “Resp FW”, “Feels”, represent the themes, Communication, Responses to Framework, and Feelings, respectively. I was able to further examine the perspectives of each respondent and compare for similarities and differences. The principle applied in the use of open coding, was also applied in the process of analyzing the data, so that labels were placed on pieces of data and broken down into discrete parts, allowing for close examination and comparison of similarities and differences (Strauss and Corbin 1990, in Babbie 2004). The process allows for interpretations that impacted on practice.

Second level coding was applied in the second stage of data analysis. In this stage, I was able to apply pattern codes to larger amounts of data in the text as themes and patterns became much clearer. Pattern codes are explanatory codes which I used to identify the emergent themes. Sub-

codes were further applied to the descriptive first-level codes to guide the analysis of the main themes, as necessary, thereby giving new meanings and explanations. Pattern codes therefore gave support to the research design where I sought not only to explore, but also to evaluate the findings through an understanding of the patterns, how they occur, and why they occur (Miles and Huberman 1994). To facilitate manual coding, these codes were named as close as possible to the concepts described in the research questions and were accompanied by reflective notes, made subsequent to the data collection exercise which gave meaning and clarity to the field notes (Miles and Huberman 1994).

### **Increasing Trustworthiness**

I was conscious that my values and personal interests arising from my tenure at the institution could present biases towards the study since, according to Mertens (2003), in Cresswell 2007, the personal self becomes inseparable from the researcher-self. I therefore aimed at reducing the biases by verification through the use of official documents, and careful focus on the actual findings of the study rather than from the knowledge I held. Other techniques employed included the use of non-leading questions, a mix of structured and open-ended questions, and the administration of the same questions to all participants. The latter allowed for greater flexibility and increased credibility (Patton 1990).

I also employed the use of three “validation strategies” to document the accuracy of the research and to increase trustworthiness (Cresswell 2007). For the purpose of this qualitative research, structural corroboration will be substituted for the term “validation strategies” as a means of enhancing credibility (Eisner 1991 in Cresswell 2007). Three techniques used were: 1) triangulation, 2) writing with detailed and rich descriptions, and 3) the use of member-checking. These were easy to apply, the most popular, and the most cost-effective (Cresswell 2007). Member-checking, the most critical technique for establishing credibility was carried out where some participants were asked to comment on and verify preliminary analysis based on themes identified (Lincoln and Guba 1985 in Cresswell 2007, p). Member-checking was also carried out with some participants who were able to judge the accuracy of the data, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions of the findings; in this way participants were able to play a major role in directing as well as acting in case study research (Stake 1995 in Creswell 2007).

Additional measures to counter these concerns and ensure that accurate and insightful accounts were presented through the use of multiple strategies of validation. Triangulation took the form of multiple methods and multiple data sources. For example, multiple methods of data collection were one-to-one elite interviews, focus group studies, and document findings and these were used to validate each (Berg 2004). Multiple data sources included the perceptions from one set of participants

who corroborated the views of participants at one level of the data collection, with the views of those participants who took part in the second level of data collection. These views were also compared with the internal documentary evidence. The literature was researched to provide the theoretical framework which anchored the study in systems and management theories and related these to higher education. The findings were presented in the form of rich thick descriptions which permits the readers to transfer information pertaining to the research to other settings (Erlandson et al. 1993 in Creswell 2004). Another form of triangulation took place during the conduct of the interviews and the focus group discussions where I demonstrated reflective listening. In so doing, I repeated the responses to some of the participants and had them confirm and or clarify.

### **Limitations of the Study**

It was important to identify these biases which could affect the credibility of the research (Merriam 1998). The first limitation stems from the fact that the research is confined to one higher education institution, as well as to a single campus of that institution. Although I was cognizant that this decision could impact on the level of transferability that can obtain, the choice to use the Mona Campus as a single-case with three embedded cases, vis-à-vis the Administrators, the Academics, and the Students allowed for greater depth in exploring and evaluating some of the issues that might assist in the transformation of

the Mona Campus as outlined in the 2007/12 Strategic Plan. The use of a multi-case approach would add breadth to the research but not without compromising depth. The decision to carry out the research on the Mona Campus as a single entity was discussed in detail under the section “Ethical Considerations”. The decision was also based on the “boundedness” of time in which to complete the research.

A second limitation had to do with the topic investigated, as the possibility existed for biases resulting in my role as the researcher, and as a member of the senior administrative staff assigned to the office given the mandate of academic quality assurance. A third limitation occurred during the process of the research, in which I noted certain changes that have been implemented on the Mona campus based on the objectives of the Strategic Plan. These changes, however, have not have been fully resolved.

The fact too that the researcher is driving the process for administrative quality based on her active role in student-centred endeavours to a wide cross-section of staff could pose as a limiting factor should her biases be represented. It was important to identify these biases, which could affect the credibility of the research (Merriam 1998). As mentioned under the caption “Ethical Considerations”, biases will be mitigated as follows:

- by strict adherence to the use of official documents rather than on her own experience
- analysis based on findings reported by respondents
- through the use of non-leading questions during the interviews

The conduct of the research in my own “backyard” was another limiting factor. Procedures addressing these limitations were also dealt with under the sections “Ethical Considerations”, and “Increasing Trustworthiness” in which I explained the importance of relying on the use of themes, patterns and codes to interpret and make assertions, which guided the data presentation and analysis in Chapter 4.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, I discuss the findings of three units of analysis involving administrators, academics, and students. These units of analysis are embedded in a larger case study conducted on the efficacy of the administrative framework that is utilized at the University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona Campus. I gathered data during this study through in-depth interviews with 28 stakeholders from four main groups: senior management, senior administrators, academics, administrators of academic departments. I also gathered data from 20 students in two focus group studies. These groups were further divided into three units of analysis: 1) senior administrators, who comprise members of senior executive management, and senior administrative and professional staff; 2) academics, who comprise lecturers, heads of academic departments and deans; 3) students, who comprise full-time undergraduates and post-graduates. The findings presented were guided by the research questions to form themes which are used as topics in this chapter. These themes allowed me to explore the phenomena through the voices of different stakeholders. I used narrative accounts, reflectivity, and ‘strips of talk’ to provide thick descriptions of the experiences that key informants shared as I interacted with them.

## **EMBEDDED CASES**

### **1. THE ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTIONS**

#### **Higher Education Frameworks**

The administrators in this study were drawn from University Centre and Mona Campus administration and include Wilmot, John, and Harry of senior executive management. Mary, Julie, Marian, Jamel, Thelma, Bonnie, Beverley, Antoinette, Shelly and Ann-marie are senior administrators, and Sidney and Noel are professionals. I began my discussion by asking them the first question: “Is there a framework in higher education that guides UWI administrators in their approach to quality?” To ensure that the question was understood, I shared examples of frameworks that exist in higher education, namely, Total Quality Management (TQM), and Investors in People (IiP). In spite of this, administrators could not identify frameworks at the UWI with any of these, or any other that exists in higher education.

Mary, a senior administrator who has been in the system for approximately thirty five years was my first participant. She was returning from an orientation session which she had organized and explained that “training and orientation is very important to us here at the University” (T1PD, p2, L47-48) and that staff members need to develop the right attitude and values that the university hones “early in the day before they are spoilt by some of us who have been around and have developed bad



attitudes” (T1PD, p2, L53-55). She, like other administrators, referred to an informal approach to quality management. I was led to believe that the unstructured quality management approaches were the reason why administrators were unable to speak with more certainty and clarity about the existence of higher education frameworks at UWI. Here are the views of Mary and Julie

I am not able to say that the University system falls into any of these frameworks, but we have an approach to quality management. We’ve sort of adopted an approach without formalizing it in our every day practice... (T1PD, p1, L19-22).

...I am not too sure...over the years the university has had many complaints about the quality of the service that we deliver. In recent times the university has developed a customer service charter and expects that after training, members of staff will operate within that frame-work of the charter...the charter has not been really circulated widely so in terms of implementation that hasn’t taken place either. (T4DPR, p1, L8-17).

The informal approach referred to is the training in Quality Customer Care which has been provided for staff members over the last seven to ten years and which is guided by the Customer Service Charter. Mary believed that this was important and stated that “Anything we do must be done with high quality in mind whether you sweep or... for satisfying the customer beyond their expectations” (T1PD, p1, L30-33). The customers she referred to are the people that the UWI serves, including the students and staff. She explained that the Customer Service Charter (see Appendix 8) is a formal document approved by Finance and General Purposes

Committee (F&GPC) in May 2004 which guides the training in Quality Customer Care towards the delivery of Quality Service. Mary explained that training in Customer Care began following on the results of a 1998 staff survey which indicated the importance of training all groups of staff. At the outset, fifteen staff members were formally trained by an external consultant in 1999 and these core trainees designed the Customer Service Charter. They subsequently trained other staff members through the “Train the Trainers Programme” (T1PD,p1, L172-177). The Charter, she explained, is tied to service standards and commits to three fundamental principles in total customer care namely; **Attitudes**, which addresses courtesy, patience, respect, professionalism, and helpfulness; **Responsiveness**, which speaks to ready access, prompt response, courtesy, respect; **Communication**, which deals with respect to precision and clarity. It was first communicated to the campus community through academic, and faculty board meetings, the campus website and it is also displayed in some key administrative offices on the campus.

Other administrators responded in a similar manner to the question I asked about frameworks. Beverley explained, “[N]o, I really, really don’t see a framework that I could identify to say that... we are all on the same page. I really could not say I see this” (T18UH, p1,L11-13). Wilmot, who was recently appointed to the Mona campus having previously served on another campus, shared passionate concerns for the leadership and management of the UWI. I gathered that he had a personal mission which

was to change the present leadership of the institution to one that was more responsive to students' concerns. He was interested in building integrity in the core processes and referred to the six sigma management philosophy which he said he would like to see implemented at the UWI. He said, "Zero tolerance regulations and variations so you build to get 100% guarantees like if you are building parachutes you couldn't accept 95% quality because if 5% don't meet the standards you know they are dead people, that's the kind of approach...(T27ADM, p1,L40-44). He too was unable to speak to a structured approach to quality and instead expressed ideas of where he envisioned the UWI to be going in instituting one. Here is how he and Mary further explained the issue.

I don't think that our administrative processes here are given a whole lot of attention to building quality into the architecture...I don't think we have a structured approach... but it is certainly something that we want to see. The Six Sigma hasn't been applied to higher education as such, but it's something I would like to see...(Wilmot) (T27ADM, p1, L15-19, 36-39).

The University expects us to give quality service and your department has...quality assurance from the academic point of view...we now need something developed for the non-academic section of the university because we are expected to give quality service but there are there are no formal guidelines as to what is expected ...  
(Mary) (T1PD, p5, L210-216).

I had earlier explained the TQM philosophy and found it interesting to hear John and Marian, who have been in the UWI system for over thirty years, share recollections of TQM being discussed at the UWI in workshops and seminars. They tried to place a timeframe on the period

when this higher education framework was the thinking at the UWI even though they were not aware that it was either practiced, or explicitly discussed and communicated. John explained, “In fact you speak of quality, TQM we did have seminars like ten or more years ago on total quality...” (T7DP, p1, L6-10, 22-24), while Marian stated,

I don’t know that the UWI as a whole has a framework. I remember participating once in a TQM workshop...training session, but I don’t know how far...they got to implementing it in a university-wide approach. So I’m not aware of there being any one particular framework that UWI operates within...I really can’t recall... It must be over five years ago (T22UOC,p1,L 4-7, 10).

Apart from TQM which only a few could recall and IiP which only one staff member had heard about while on study leave in the United Kingdom, administrators could not compare the operations at the UWI with any higher education framework. I was therefore curious to find out from them what actually guided them in their approach to quality and so I asked the administrators to share these with me.

The findings revealed that these administrators were only in a position to discuss role-specific procedures and processes that are used in their particular areas of responsibilities. For example, from my conversations with Sidney, a professional who was appointed from the private sector to the Mona campus in the early 1990s, I understood that he too felt that the units on the campus employed different concepts of quality management. This is what he shared with me

I don't know of an administrative framework which speaks to quality...I haven't seen it on the campus. What I know is that units across the campus have from time to time embraced their own concepts of quality control or quality management. So I can speak specifically of the Student Administrative Service within recent times. (T16FIN, p1, L13-18).

Marian said, "I don't know that the UWI as a whole has a framework...I'm not aware of there being any one particular framework that UWI operates within...(T22OC,p1,L4-8)]. She further said "aim for excellence in what you do..." which she claimed was an intrinsic principle of the UWI that guided her work, one which the university "certainly expounds it, this principle of excellence" through the Instructional Development Unit (IDU) which is in place to work with faculty to bring out "excellence in research, excellence in teaching" (T22OC,p1, L24-29). The IDU offers pedagogic training to academic staff members to enrich the kinds of quality instruction and assessment required for the specific kind of student output envisaged for the world of work. A Certificate in University Teaching was developed in 2007 which is mandatory for new academic staff members, but other academics may either seek this training or may be recommended by their heads of departments. In addition to this formal certificate programme, the IDU offers frequent workshops and seminars that enhance pedagogic teaching. The effectiveness of teaching and learning is assessed by students twice per semester and this report is later fed into the annual appraisal exercise conducted by heads of departments.

Other administrators described the performance appraisal system as the possible framework, “Well, the only one that I could see fitting in that [the higher education framework] is the appraisal, the staff appraisal system...(T2TU,p1,L5-6). Jamel explained,

You are required to set objectives...keeping in mind the overall objective of the university...with that comes the whole question of quality and what is it that you deliver at the end of the day because you must give account for your stewardship so it forces you to put the pressure on the individual to perform...because you have to give account for why you didn't meet the objectives (T6REC, p 5L231-238, 249-252).

They explained that the performance appraisal system aims at assessing quality through staff performance and that there are different appraisal instruments used to assess performance for different categories of staff based on specific criteria. The criteria for members of the senior administrative and professional staff are: a) professional competence, b) industry/productive, c) service delivery, d) leadership, e) creativity and innovation, and f) outreach and university service, while those for academics staff members are; a) teaching, research, publication, scholarly activity, contribution to university life, professional activity, and public service. They explained that staff members and heads of departments in each category are expected to set joint objectives prior to a formal assessment using the job descriptions of the respective staff members and the overall strategic objectives of the strategic plan. Subsequently, staff members are expected to be formally assessed by their heads of

departments based on the achievement of these objectives. The results of the assessment may also form part of the basis for renewal of contract, and/or promotion.

Other administrators described the Quality Assurance System as the framework.

The concept is more quality improvement and the framework Mona uses is to do with the Board of Undergraduate Studies, there is a section there that deals with quality, it's not so much management as quality assurance to ensure that quality in our offerings in all aspects is maintained. (Thelma) (T5OS,p1, L9-14).

Well, the approach that I understand is the whole quality assurance aspect of it, where they do review of programmes. They actually provide evidence that quality is being applied and is being actively pursued. (Shirley) (T24ARC, p1, L7-9).

...[Y]our quality assurance is...from the academic point of view... we now need something developed for the non-academic section of the university because we are expected to give quality service but there are...no formal guidelines as to what is expected of us except that we are to give good service to staff. (Mary) (T1PD, p5, L,211-216).

Based on my association with the office that implemented the Quality Assurance initiative, participants chose not to describe this system to me as they felt that I had full knowledge. Based therefore on internal documentation and my own experience, the system is formative and ensures quality in teaching and learning through a 'fitness for purpose' quality model. Through quality evaluations, measurable standards are set which allow departments to assess where they are, where they need to be,

and what they need to do to get to where they expect to be. From this exercise, departmental aims and objectives, course/programme development and review, student feedback, learning outcomes, resources to support student learning, among other things, are discussed and documented by the department for action. Through a formal review of disciplines undertaken in five-year cycles, outcomes of the quality evaluations are measured and recommendations are made accordingly by the review team.

A few administrators explained that the mission statement and strategic objectives recorded in the strategic plans are guides to a framework of quality. These documents are referred to in Appendices 1 and 2. They explained that “[I]t works in part...we do celebrate excellence...we do get good graduates but there is always room for improvement”.

(T22OC,p7L294-301). “[I] don’t think it was set down as a framework formally, like you wouldn’t find it noted as here is the administrative framework but ...you will find documents in various you know, guides of the strategic plan of the university those are certainly written down”.

Others felt that,

Well the best way I could describe it is a human development framework...yes, because if you look back at the old charter and the establishment of the university it was about development of the human potential as they say in the UWI statements like unlocking the human potential...yes the mission statement really guides that framework. (Noel) (T26PRIV, p1, L5-13).



I'm not familiar with an overt explanation...of the framework that is guiding UWI administrative systems but given the student-centredness...in our strategic plan...I would assume that we can talk about the framework being one that is...specifically student centred. It also makes sense using that as well tying it in with our own quality [assurance] processes aimed at various stakeholders...I certainly would say that it is not explicit. The framework is one that is meant to be people-centred and people are rated which then means that the ideas about caring for peoples' needs are carried out to the fullest and to the best extent. (Antoinette) (T13VA,p1,L5-18).

### **Workable Higher Education Frameworks**

The question of whether the higher education frameworks identified were applicable or worked at the UWI could not be answered by the administrators as they could not identify higher education frameworks at the UWI. A few felt that some TQM-like features were visible in some of UWI's operations which led me to explore this further through the second-level interviews with administrators to evaluate the extent to which TQM was evident and if so, its effectiveness. Noel, who started his management career in the private sector and was now at the UWI, described TQM as a "movement of the past" which he felt was no longer applicable at the UWI. This is what he had to say,

You have to be careful how you use these movements that have taken place in quality over the years. Total Quality came and you know a lot of things about team work and cross-functional relationships but underlying all that, it is a very strong and also incremental change whereas, where the university is going now is that you want quantum leap changes...It would be fair to say we either consciously or deliberately had some aspects of TQM...but what we are being forced into now is a new quality model which is a transformative model... [TQM] can't work now

(laughs)...and that again is driven by the competitive environment (F26PRIV,p 3-4,L131-149).

Other administrators also explained that "...[T]QM is kind of outdated because people are saying...you cannot manage quality at a certain level...the concept is more quality improvement, continuous quality improvement...[T5OS,p1,L8-10]. Antoinette was more expressive on this subject. Her passion could not go unnoticed as she compared it to an operational tool which she stated is applicable to a factory. I watched her as she demonstrated with the use of both hands, how a cookie cutter actually cuts deep into the dough to get a certain fixed shape and size. This is what she said,

...[We] are a higher education institution we are not a factory so for example something like TQM wouldn't work for us because the assumption is that you almost have a cookie cutter and you can drop it on this thing here, turn it a little bit and the thing should look like... (T13OV, p5, L225-228).

Other administrators discussed the challenges that stymied the effectiveness of the role-specific processes they described and which they claimed, gave guidance in their approach to quality. The findings indicated that whenever these role-specific processes were not effective, the reasons had to do with the lack of commitment in leadership, the lack of monitoring, and follow-up, and the manner in which processes were implemented. Mary explained the challenges she faced in not being able to get the full academic staff compliment, who were an important target audience, to attend the training sessions.

...[O]ur greatest difficulty is getting our senior administrative staff and our heads of departments to bring themselves...to the training in quality leadership and I think that this is why our quality customer care programme is not as successful as it ought to be. Heads of departments who are the senior administrators out there in the departments do not attend these sessions...they send their administrative staff and we want them as leaders...to attend...(T1PD, p1, L36-40, 67-71).

She further explained how these heads of departments and deans across the three campuses quietly sought supervisory training from another department and eagerly went to an off-site training course. This 'strip of talk' describes this issue.

Interviewer: So you...do have this approach to train all levels of staff

Mary: All levels of staff initially...administrative, technical and service staff and in a limited way the academic and senior administrative staff

Interviewer: You mentioned earlier that they do not attend...

Mary: ...not attend in the numbers we expect and heads of departments...do not attend these sessions...They send their administrative staff and we want them as leaders to attend...Of the 45 heads of department, we may get five attending...In recent times the Office of Administration has been working with the heads of departments and some of them realize that they need the training and they quietly ask for it...The deans here, all the deans at Cave Hill and St. Augustine met some place and had supervisory training.

Interviewer: Why do you think they request this off-site training?

Mary: Ha, ha...they think they know it all...they are experts in the field, they are professors of economics or professor of chemistry they have arrived and what are they doing with a little supervisory management course? I think they have come to realize that they

need to be trained... and they will go to the Hiltons and sit in a two- three-day course....yes, they go quietly (T1PD, p2, L60-91).

She went on to explain that “[I]n order to attract the Heads of departments we now call it ‘Executive Forum: Leadership in Customer Care’...and we had full house each time but still not sufficient Heads of departments who matter seriously, (T1PD,p10,L432-443).

The student-centredness objective in the 2002/2007 Strategic Plan guided the administrators especially as some explained that it was tied in with the quality assurance system. They felt that quality assurance works academically through the ‘fitness for purpose’ quality model. They however felt that though it was effective from the academic point of view, it was not as effective administratively. This is what was said,

I think it could work administratively...academically the fitness for purpose quality model... has been very, very clearly articulated and formalized. What I have not seen proof of is a similar sort of process of formalization of quality framework for administrative processes...A lot of the work for our academic programmes is supported by and clearly hindered by what happens in our administrative system...a larger culture of quality has not yet...been inculcated administratively. (Antoinette) (T13BU,p3,L125-134).

[I]t is effective, I think it has a voice in the university so it’s important to the university how it adjusts...to make recommendations...if you ask me if what we have in place is working, my answer is that it is still work-in-progress. (Themla) (T14OS, p1, L66-68, 315-217).

[I] think it [quality assurance] has been good. It has focused our attention to the students and what it is the university is there for it also has given focus to our other

stakeholders.... The quality assurance model...doesn't go far enough in terms of looking at the other administrative areas. (Shelly) (T24ARC,p4-5,L123-131).

Further discussions afforded me the clarification I sought, as the administrators explained that "...academic programmes and disciplines have to work in tandem with the administrative structure and the administrative structure is meant to support...the activities of the academic discipline" (T13BU,p3,L138-140). Antoinette gave an example of the frustrations encountered by a senior academic administrator with whom she met prior to our meeting and who had explained to her the frustrations of the registration process for students as they interacted with administration. The work of the academics, she explained, was therefore "hindered to a great degree by the lack of quality and customer service orientation from the higher levels of the bureaucratic structure, the lack of timeliness, and the way things don't seem to articulate together very well so that different arms seem to be working at cross purposes" (T13BU,p4,L150-153).

Other administrators proudly referred to the new Student Administrative Services (SAS). They said, "We centralize the framework" (T16FIN, p4, L167). They explained that in the SAS certain pertinent day-to-day functions relating to the registry and bursary are operated in one central location. Sidney further explained that formerly, these units in the registry and bursary operated in isolation from each other. He exclaimed, "[T]he fact that they go in, they're seated, and there are persons who can deal

with them who are trained in the right attitude, the right aptitude...”

(T16FIN, p7, L290-294). Administrators further said,

We have to strive to get fairly universal service levels agreement and I don't think we are there yet but if you look at...the Student Administrative Services that would be an attempt to bring some element of quality assurance into the whole programme. (Marie) (T27ADM, p2, L60-63).

The annual staff appraisal was another role-specific process that administrators described. They however had mixed views on its effectiveness. Some felt that it facilitated staff giving an account of their stewardship through clearly defined criteria, while others felt that its effectiveness depended, to a great extent, on the head of department. They agreed however that the assessment of faculty conducted by students was effective and that these two instruments assured quality through staff performance. Here is how Jamel and Bonnie expressed the effectiveness of these assessment frameworks

Students can demand quality from the lecturers in terms of assessment... You are required to set objectives... keeping in mind the overall objective of the university... with that comes the whole question of quality and what is it that you deliver at the end of the day because you must give account for your stewardship. So it forces you to put the pressure on the individual to perform... (T6REC, p5L231-238, 249-252).

[W]ell it works for those people who have a head who is committed to the process... the university could talk until it is blue in the face, if the heads are not prepared to carry... (T2TU, p2, L71-80, p3, L101-103).

Bonnie was adamant that some heads of department did not take the staff appraisal seriously and gave an example that when the training in staff

appraisal was conducted, only one member of the executive management, for whom the training was intended, actually attended. This, she explained, caused the external facilitator to comment on their absence as “defeat[ing] the effectiveness of the system” (T2TU,p3, L96-97). In my discussion with John, I found out that he was absent from the performance assessment training that Bonnie earlier spoke about. He shared with me that the annual performance assessment tool itself was not only ineffective, but that it also lacked a system of serious monitoring and follow-up. He said,

Various mechanisms have not been working well...annual assessment of staff has been very haphazard...I am not sure to what extent there is any follow-up on areas of weakness. If you don't have monitoring and follow-up...with consequences for...reward and penalties then you're wasting your time ...we have been very weak when it comes to monitoring and follow-up...(T7DP,p1,L24-53).

### **Management Style and Culture**

Administrators indicated that there were different management styles and cultures at the UWI. On the question of management styles, Shelly indicated that, “[T]here are different styles...in different departments, it is so diverse” (T24ARC, p8 ,L246) and Wilmot explained that “Different heads in different places respond differently that doesn't mean that the core elements shouldn't be there...” (T27,ADM,p5, L195-196). He could not identify an overall management style but strongly emphasized the importance of managing the human resources. Here is what he said,

I don't know that there is an overall management style... there is something called a leadership brand...it speaks to creating a type of leader... cultivating the next level of leadership... (T27ADM,p4,L171-174, 188-191, 195-199).

He, like others, is not satisfied with the leadership at the UWI which he explained is questionable in terms of its complacency, irresponsible actions, and lack of accountability that often impact negatively on quality. His desire to create a brand of leaders stems from his observation over the years that “you put academic heads to run departments/units without preparing them...The leader must be able to convince people as to the reasonableness, value and cause you are advocating...” (T27ADM,p4- 5, L180,187-188). Mary had earlier made a similar comment when she said that the management styles in the departments contributed to customer breaches stating that “the way some managers treat their staff leaves much to be desired which is one of the reasons for the low quality of customer service delivery on the campus” (T1PDp10, L432-433). She further explained

Yes they deal with things differently they are doing to their staff the very things they are telling them not to do to the students... We are internal customers and unless you appreciate that and treat these customers...your staff in the way that you want the students to be treated...we talk about the motto of the Ritz Carlton Hotel, ‘Ladies and gentlemen serving ladies and gentlemen’ and if we all see ourselves as ladies and gentlemen serving ladies and gentlemen we can't go wrong...(T1PD, p1,10-11,L452-465).

Other administrators described the management styles as bureaucratic, laid-back and reactionary, autocratic, and personality-based. Julie said, “Bureaucratic...in order for decisions to take place a number of steps have



to be followed and a number of committees...before a decision is finalized...and the way that the university is run it's a bureaucracy", (T4DPR,p6,L52-55,66). It was interesting to hear John, of senior executive management describe the style as "One would say highly tolerant or...relatively laxed...not sufficient sustaining of effort, so you put in a particularly necessary piece but you don't go beyond...the management style tends to be...firefighting" (T7DP,p14,L519-523). His views corroborate with those of Beverley who explained "It would seem as if we are very reactionary, we react to a crisis...but when there has been a crisis, we react to the crisis and then see what comes from that" (T18UHC, p17,L256-259). Shelton who exclaimed that

The university's management style is far too laid back...not assertive...we're just behind. The environment is not one that is driven by performance...people is one of the biggest problems we have here...they are negative in terms of work attitude...we need to come up to speed in terms of our management style...(T16BUR, p16,L99-101,109-111).

Some of the administrators who described a personality-based management style felt that it only served to circumvent processes. They explained that it was evident in persons who hold power in the institution and they believed that the bureaucratic structure permits this style. Antoinette, Marie, and Marion, in particular, were rather annoyed as they explained to me how they found it quite unbelievable that one person could be so influential that he or she could override a regulation that is documented and minuted.

People at certain levels are very important, extremely. There is a personality culture...one person can make a massive change ...one person can upset a standing regulation it's a onemanship...(Marie) (T9ADM,,p18,L456, p20,L486-487, 498-502).

I don't know that there is any one style...I think of the university... a complex organization and the style changes with people in the post...to say that the university has a style I think it follows the personality of the people in the post...(Marian) (T22,OCp4,L52-57).

It is very personality based, it's built up around very powerful individuals who have the possibility of circumventing and thwarting...processes...It is very much built on bureaucratic notions...we are managing to perpetuate systems. (Antoinette) (T13OVp9L387-389, 398)

Among the different management styles described, administrators discussed a new participative management style which they happily exclaimed had emerged during the conduct of the Strategic Planning Process in 2006 and which they felt was highly appreciative. Harry, a professional who is also a senior executive manager said

A participative management style where we listen to staff and students. More and more this style is seen, more understanding, more meetings with unions...we are getting to a service culture" (T3FIN,p3,L98-99).

Mary was overjoyed with this new style and said

Over a year ago, we have come into a new kind of management style...a kind of highly participative management style at the top...that kind of style seems to be well appreciated...(T1PD,10, L421-422).

This new emerging management style operates parallel with other existing styles, according to other administrators, including Shelly and Bonnie who expressed the following views respectively. "The overall management

style is sometimes autocratic...it's a mixture of autocratic and... participatory management", (T6REC,p19,L1028-1047), "Certainly not fully democratic it's approaching democracy but it's still a far way from it..." (T21ID,p6,L267-270).

Having been informed of the different management styles, I explored with the participants whether or not there was a fit or compatibility between these and the administrative processes they identified. The findings were also mixed. Some expressed the view that a fit or compatibility did not always exist while others did believe there was some amount of compatibility. Though Noel expressed that some amount of compatibility exists between the collegial management style and the human development framework, he however felt that this compatibility might not be efficient. He also explained how he set about "infus[ing] some of the models from outside [external to the UWI]" (T26SB, p9,L380-381). He referred to the competitive nature of the higher education environment which he believed is the driving force for change to those existing models. Here is what he said.

The style historic of the university is collegial...we are trying to move towards a different decision-making model...to speed up towards making decisions and critical decisions more rapidly...it is compatible but what you have to be careful of is the efficiency of it, the productivity of it. (T26SB, p8,L366-378).

Other administrators explained that an autocratic style did not fit well with the kind of engagement that is necessary in ensuring that the vision and objectives are shared. Here is what they said.

It can't fit into it, because the new vision...calls for the participation of everybody and whoever is at the top is going to filter down what their objectives are... in such a way that the senior administrative staff can understand the vision of the university in a much better way and make that vision their vision too...the autocratic culture can't work...the structure of the university is what I see as a hindrance to our progress...so if your senior administrative staff doesn't buy it how are they going to sell it? (Jamel) (T6REC,p21-22,L1170-1193).

Administrators also felt that there was no compatibility between the bureaucratic, laid-back, and reactive management styles and the customer service training process which they earlier described. They spoke to the necessary changes that would have to be made for such compatibility.

Julia said "...there is going to be a shift from the old bureaucratic style to a more modern way of making decisions...new approach to decision making...it is supposed to be less bureaucratic" (T4DPR,p6,L269-273).

"No, no it's not compatible with the framework. The management style has to change...because the management style that you had in the past was where somebody has been here for ten years so you give them the job"

(T16BUR, p18,L793-794, 799-801), "No, one is disorder, one is order...the framework is orderly, if you react [to issues] then it can't be orderly" (T18UHC,p18,L289-291). Antoinette explained, "...[W]e have to do a lot to change the personality nature of our management style in order for it to be, not about those who are...leading...but that they manage

in order to care for and to serve rather than to gratify their own egos and their own personal needs...(T13BUp9L398-403-419).

I then enquired about the overall culture on the campus. The administrators in my sample were unable to describe an overall culture at UWI and instead discussed varied cultures that existed. These included a relaxed, laid back, family oriented, male dominated, not student-centred, resistant to change, a culture of who you know and which family you belong to, personality-based, an open culture where people do as they please, some amount of collegiality. I noted that some of these cultures appeared to be similar to the management styles described as Wilmot and Antoinette expressed, “The leadership of the organization defines the culture in the organization...” (T27ADM, p5,L228-229).

Interviewer: How would you describe the overall culture?

Antoinette: So if the management style is like that it is in a great way linked to the culture of the university whereby I think it’s a culture that doesn’t quite know what to do with itself I say that because I think it has a number of different levels and facets to it. It’s a very personalist culture...big personalities, big egos are important... (T13OV, p9L398-403-419).

John was concerned about the relaxed and laidback culture, he said, “We must be sort of, I don’t want to use the word laid-back but it [the culture] is relaxed. People get stressed out because the culture is relaxed in the sense that one doesn’t get urgency...”(T7DP,p14, L519). Here are other perceptions on the cultures.

I'm not sure what kind of word to use for the overall [culture] it's unique in that I think we're moving from... the Patriarchal Society and I don't think we're fully gotten over that. (Beverley) (T18UHC,p17,L266-267).

Overall culture of this university is who you know and which family you belong to...who you drink with down at the Senior Common Room that is where their values are...if you just stand on your principles you stay at the bottom of the ladder right? You have to be hypocritical to get anywhere... (Bonnie) (T21TU,p6,L272-276).

Wilmot believes that there ought to be a single culture that distinguishes the UWI as a single institution. He made reference to “devising a university way” so that “...staff in St. Augustine, in Cave Hill, in the Bahamas and the UWI 12, will have a certain way of dealing with things...”(T27ADM, p5, 6, L202-212). In a similar way, Mary had earlier described the culture of the Ritz Carlton Hotel through their motto “Ladies and Gentlemen serving ladies and gentlemen” which she felt if institutionalized at the UWI would ensure that “we can’t go wrong”, (TIPD,p11,L458-461). Other administrators described a culture of academic excellence in teaching and research. As they spoke, I realized that they were in fact referring to a quality slogan that is popularly used to advertise and promote the institution rather than a culture. For example, Marion said, “It’s very hard to describe the university culture...I think what the university prides itself in is a culture of what I would call academic excellence” (T26SB, p9, L395-401). Noel, on the other hand, placed academic excellence within the context of the market place and in light of the competition to highlight the point that with all the excellent

things that the UWI is doing, the challenge from his perspective had to do with whether or not these added value to the society. He gave the example of how best faculty could make “that mental shift from just concentrating on the purity of the research to how they are getting it to be of value to the society” (T26SB, p10, L417-419). Here are the views of other administrators, who proudly described a culture of excellence.

There is a culture of excellence... on research days we see that there is excellence in research...and there is excellence in teaching too because the other universities grab our graduates and they are able to pursue graduate studies with distinction...(Mary) (T1PD,p11,L472-480).

This university is steeped in a culture of academic excellence and that is why everything else is analyzed in terms of the academic...(Thelma) (T5,p9,L394-399).

Marion referred to a collegial culture and questioned whether the financial demands to make more money had contributed to its weakening. She explained “I think there was more collegiality in the past but as the financial demands to make more money or as the contributions from governments decreased and the demands to become financial driven I don’t know if that is what affected collegiality (T22OC,p4-5,L171-175, 207). Administrators explained that some of these cultures were transitional, for example one that was approaching a service culture; one moving from a closed to an open culture, and a unique culture which was moving from a patriarchal to a 21<sup>st</sup> century culture. A male dominant culture was notable in the selection of principal officers at the UWI, this, they explained, was on the decline as expressed here,

...[C]ertain type of resistance to change...change is not readily accepted...there is also a male dominated culture. Culture has not been student-centred which is a long term objective...the culture of not giving excellent customer service to...our students that has to change. (Julie) (T4DPR,p7-8,L300,306-309,314-325).

The culture is changing...it's kind of closed, it's getting more open now, much more open. More receptive to change...the culture use to be dominated by just some people at the top. It's more inclusive now. (Shelley) (T6REC,p21,L1130-1139).

There was a need to change the way we approached the whole question of administering our services in a general way. In the selection of the staff who interacts with our constituency, the training, the performance standards that we established and the monitoring of those standards. Shelton (T16FIN, p1-2,L30-49).

In terms of the compatibility of the culture with the framework, Sidney expressed the view that “It’s not gonna fit very well initially, you’re going to have to adjust the culture”, (T16 FIN, p17, L768-779). Jamel, Mary and Antoinette on the other hand, felt that the culture of the UWI was considered compatible with the administrative processes they described. They said respectively “it fits ok you know. I think it fits ok as a part of the new, as a part of the change process. I think it fits ok” (T6REC, p21, L1149-50). “[Y]es, the very fact that we are...setting up a ‘Centre of Excellence’...I would say this is a move in the right direction” (T1PD, p11, L498-504). Other administrators had this to say

I think they go very well together because I would want to argue that were there to be a change in the administrative framework, it would require change in the kind of personality driven type culture that we are a part of...Antoinette. (T13OV,p9,L407-413).



It [the UWI] is doing the things that fit the prevailing culture...it is the framework that should now change the culture...it should and that is the expectation but will it?...It is determined by who is at the head. Bonnie (T21TU, p7, L296-302).

### **Criteria for Administrative Quality**

Reoccurring themes of leadership and commitment, monitoring and follow-up, open communication, accountability and the management of the human resources emerged as criteria for administrative quality to which the administrators unanimously discussed would ensure greater quality on the Mona campus. They felt that the human resources ought to be better managed through careful recruitment and placement, communication, on-going training, and monitoring of standards. They also felt that it was important to cultivate “a culture of monitoring because we have not... been monitoring...so I think if we monitor and retrain ‘nipping the bud’ any inclination to revert to the old culture. I think that should assist”. (T1PD,p13, L511-514). This is what they said,

[W]e need to start at recruitment and placement and look more clearly at the job-fit situation...We have job descriptions, we have standards and anybody we are employing should meet the basic requirements. Then...as soon as the person comes on the job, training should be designed...We also need to disseminate information better. (Mary) (T1PD, p13, L549-558).

More sustained training for staff at all levels, academics resist mostly so UWI should look at reviews of student assessment done by students for these staff and take student feedback to encourage staff to attend training in customer service in the same way that they are encouraged to take training at IDU. Improve communication of decisions that

is beneficial to stakeholders. (Julie) (T4DP,p9,L358-359,392-400).

We need a culture where everyone could contribute by participation in the development of the university...I would say a participatory culture, retaining some aspects of the bureaucratic culture...(Julie) (T4DPR,p8, L358-359).

John expressed the criteria in the context of student satisfaction and felt that these criteria would best survive in a culture where people work together and are rewarded, failing that, they should be penalized. He said, “You want a situation where people understand what they are here about...but it also needs monitoring, follow-ups, and reward or penalty”.

He emphatically explained,

[S]atisfaction in administrative quality would come when our students, the overall majority has expressed satisfaction with their student experience. Some of the things are working, others are not working and I think the more you have leadership and supervision, monitoring and follow-up, the more you will have these systems functioning... (John) (T7DP,p17-18, L640-642, 647-650).

Others felt that measures ought to be implemented for accountability.

They expressed, “[T]he criteria would be the people-centredness of it, the measurable effectiveness of what we are doing...and that people can then be held accountable...”. They also felt that “the key thing is that there must be mechanisms for communication with the customers in order to help them understand the processes”, (T13BU,p10, L447-450, 466-467).

Others said, “Ensure happy students, serve students properly, listen to complaints”, (T3FIN,p3, L20-22). This is how Wilmot summarized the criteria,

[I]t has to be what we think the students want most...they need to have high quality teaching leadership. We need to ensure that our examination and registration processes... are hassle free, we need to ensure that we have proper facilities for our students...but...it must be from the perspective of what the students want. (T27ADM, p6, L247, 256-271).

Marie's criterion was based on the way decisions are made, "onemanship" which she earlier described. She felt that the "framework should be the mission and vision of the university...everything must reflect [these] and must take into account how the university is going to operate", (T9,ADM, p22, L552-556).

Bonnie, had earlier discussed the effectiveness of the performance appraisal system including the ills of it when it is managed in an unfair manner. She explained that the ideal culture should be based "on principle, on fairness, on objectivity... flexibility moving away from rigidity, need a degree of flexibility and transparency". (T21TU,p7,L308-310). Sidney and Noel worked in the private sector before and so they passionately shared with me criteria based on efficiency and standards. Sidney felt that "when you're operating in a real world you have to look at how things are done out there... You have to catch up, you have to come up to speed, (T16FIN, p18-19, L810, 816-831). Noel, on the other hand felt that felt it necessary to discuss the kind of administrative framework that was needed at the UWI. This is what he said,

We have to look at how efficient the [management style] is and make the change...cut the transaction time for decision-making...Frameworks are usually a combination

of different things so you...want to develop something which is going to have a mixture of frameworks. You have to decide what...we need to do. One that is urgent right now is the transformation model which is saying that we need to respond urgently to what the external environment is telling us, the competition... (T26PRIV,p10,L447-459).

## **2. THE ACADEMICS' PERCEPTIONS**

The academic staff in my sample was drawn from some of the teaching departments of the four Faculties: 1) Humanities and Education, 2) Medical Sciences, 3) Pure and Applied Sciences, and 4) Social Sciences on the Mona Campus. They comprise lecturers, senior lecturers, such as Lisa, Raymond, Stephan, and Barry, as well as heads of these departments, deans and sub-deans including Andrew, Anngel, Michael, Dane, and Tom.

### **Higher Education Frameworks**

Like the administrators, the academics could not describe higher education frameworks that exist at the UWI despite my discussing examples of some. Similarly, I found it quite interesting to hear two academics, Andrew and Anngel, a dean and sub-dean from two different faculties share with me what they remembered about TQM as a higher education framework. These are their views,

[D]on't know that there is a framework. There is...an acceptance of the need for continuous improvement of personnel at all levels. Not a model, a mantra. TQM, there was talk about that at the university a few years ago but... what is important is for the university to have a culture of quality management. Andrew (T2HART, p1,L6-12).

I guess it would be more like a TQM-kind of framework where they try to make sure that all the inputs are there and

to measure them and so on. I don't think it is a full TQM because there is a lot more that would have to go into it, but where it really does fall down is what really happens after you measure, which is a big part of TQM. The feedback loop is too short...so I guess we have adopted a sort of halfway model. Anngel (T19MS,p1,L12-20,30-31).

Michael, on the other hand disagreed with his colleagues. He was one of the academics whom I asked to verify the views shared by others concerning the frameworks they described. I asked him whether or not any aspect of TQM was employed at the UWI and the two examples in the following quotation spoke volumes to the effect that TQM was not practiced. Here is what he said,

No, I don't agree that anyone would say that we have TQM system here although it is a model. We are the opposite of TQM because a dead dog could be lying in the lecture room and people would step over it ...or if the pipe should burst... in the middle of the graduation lawn ...In TQM, you would have so many reports on the water that they would fix it quickly. (T25DSS, p2, L79-84).

I was interested in finding out from the academics in my sample what actually guided them in their work in the absence of higher education frameworks. So I continue my talk with Lisa, a lecturer. When the question of a higher education framework was first posed to her, she was of the opinion that I might have erred in including her in my sample as she explained that she was not aware of the UWI's operations including whether or not a framework existed. She however explained, "[W]hen we talk about a framework, in my mind, I don't expect to be looking up in the

air and thinking what it should be, I expect to see a document”.

(T14CHP,p1,L1,28-30).

Whereas the other academics could not explain with certainty the existence of higher education frameworks at the UWI, Raymond was very adamant that there were none in place. He had a concern about the mismanagement of the use of resources and he used the opportunity to point out to me the three new buildings which were being erected for the sole purpose of administration. He carefully watched me as if to make sure that I too saw them, and said, “I don’t think there is a framework, no because if there was a framework then administration wouldn’t grow as it is growing currently. The university administration is top heavy and a lot of resource is being directed or used up by administration”

(T11MS,p1,L5-8). I asked him what actually guided university administrators in their work in the absence of a framework. Here is what he firmly and very confidently reported,

Ad hoc solution to problems because you must understand the history of this institution...and...you will realize that there is no framework that this administration has here...Every time a problem comes up then they try to solve the problem they do not try to anticipate the problem, they react to problem. (T11MS,p1,L13-18).

Raymond squarely places the reason for the lack of a framework on Jamaica’s history. He explained that the university inherited a colonial framework since Jamaica became independent thereby giving justification that such a colonial framework still exists. He said, “The university

operates like a plantation institution and it hasn't shed those characteristics...so that they are still in that mode where they clobber people over the head to get results...they need to operate like...an efficient business" (T11MS,p2, L78-81). He went on to make a comparison of the university's operations with that of a plantation and said,

...[W]hen Jamaica received independence in 1962 there was a framework established at that time...a colonial framework.. This is the only institution that academic staff is on a 24 hour call...the Vice Chancellor can call you at any time...so we still have a colonial institution. (T11MS,p4, L166-173).

He explained the importance of a framework to the university in terms of the pro-active way in which it offers solutions to problems and the negative effects of the non-existence of one and he made sure that I did not miss the emphasis he thought that the university should place on the students and the departments and not administration. Listen to this 'strip of talk'.

Interviewer: So do you think there should be a framework?

Raymond: Obviously, if you have a framework and there are specific goals and objectives then problems can be identified and solutions put in place way in advance of those problems...the administration in this institution just reacts to problems

Interviewer: And how does that affect the operations?

Raymond: ...it adversely affects the operation...all down the line...academic staff, administrative staff, students. One of the problems is that the administration thinks that it is the university, so everything and everyone else come in second. That outlook needs to change as the students are the university, the departments are the university and not the administration. (T11MS,p1, L19-29).

Academics, like the administrators in this study, described different UWI processes and procedures across the institution, that guide them in their work, some even described these as frameworks. When the question of a higher education framework was posed to Barry, he felt it was important to explain to me that he was a lecturer and not an administrator. He however stated that he recognized the role that a lecturer plays in administration. He, like other academics in other faculties was certain that the regulations, which they described as regulatory frameworks, guided them. These they described as faculty booklets and booklets to guide heads of departments and explained that they were part of the quality system which aimed at regulating behaviour and performance through set rules and regulations.

[I] don't know that there is a single framework but there are frameworks that provide guidance to what we should do and how we should do it. There are regulations that tell you how the system functions, what is your role in the system, so I would say that within the UWI system there are different tiers of frameworks that provide that guidance. (Barry) (T20GG,p1, L9-22).

[F]or four years no framework existed for individuals and institution, no clear guidelines for senior administrative staff. As head of department, I walked into a booklet which had procedures with direct rules and responsibilities of heads of departments. This framework was a structure which guided staff on student matters, that is, on registration. I should have had this before accepting the position as it was detailed and clear. (Barry) (T12LS, p1, L5-10).

[W]e have something to guide us in terms of the regulations that we have in place and how we go about administering the regulations...but they are the processes and we are



putting some new processes in place to help ensure that we can deliver quality in all general work areas. (Stanley) (T8DDS, p1,L10-22).

Academics who are also uncertain of higher education frameworks at the university, spoke about role-specific procedures as frameworks that serve the interest of their particular section, some quite similar to what the administrators described. The findings also revealed that, academics, like administrators operate on a day-to-day basis without being explicitly aware of the higher education framework that the UWI adopts causing them to make reference to the vision and mission of the UWI as the guiding structure. This is how Stephan, Lisa, and Tom expressed their thoughts,

I don't know. My feeling is that the heads of departments may be used to different philosophies for looking at quality management...for the university they have a philosophy, they have a vision and a mission and that is the foundation of any kind of structure to look for quality. (Stephan) (T15SON,p1,L18-29).

The fact that they have the mission to unlock the potential of Caribbean people, I'm assuming that there must be a plan in place for you to think about doing that and I would imagine that part of the framework has to do with the quality of the students that we take in and the opportunities that they offer them to develop themselves. (Lisa) (T14CHP,p1,L1-5).

I don't know officially of any...about two years ago some stuff like a Charter for customer service... It is implied how we do things as oppose to...something stated as a broad strategy...the framework is being student centred ...but there isn't a name for any particular framework that they are using maybe you could pull it up and apply it. (Tom) (T17CHP,p1,L37-50, 93-94).

A few academics described the quality assurance system, as a framework. “Fitness for purpose, quality of teaching and learning but no clear approach to quality”([T25DSS,p1,L6-7). “There are checks and balances because for instance the very rigorous quality assurance and quality testing of what we deliver here, we have an internal system in the university for doing that,”.(T20GG,p1,L9-22).

### **Workable Higher Education Frameworks**

This question was not answered as the academics in my sample could not identify any higher education framework at the UWI. A few were able to recall TQM being discussed some time ago, but could not describe its implementation. In the absence of higher education frameworks, they described the rules and regulations which includes the departmental and handbooks, and “...a booklet which had procedures with direct rules and responsibilities for heads of departments” (T12LSC,p1,L8-9). They explained that these regulations are applicable to the functioning of the university as well as specific to departments and faculties. Barry explained how the system functions, and indicated one’s role in the system and how it guided them in their everyday work. “I think so, I think it [regulatory framework] works and when I say it works, it works for both the students and administrators” (T20GG,p2,L62-63). His peers, including Daniel and Stanley also expressed the usefulness of regulatory frameworks to the functioning of their work.

[B]ooklet of rules and responsibilities for heads of department] works yes and partially for central administration, yes as it gives a level playing field. The document serves as a baseline which will have to be tweaked to suit particular departments. But it works for departments and in turn UWI. (Daniel) (T12LS,p1,L34-38).

[U]niversity regulations and faculty regulations work for both staff and students, well it's working for the entire faculty, staff, students. You can't have one without the other. Quality means that everybody, all the constituencies have to be involved...(Stanley) (T8DDS,p3L113-116).

Daniel earlier revealed in the joy of being able to “walk into a booklet which had procedures with direct rules and responsibilities for heads of departments”([T12LS,p1,L8-9). He said that it was such an important document in guiding him that he wished that he had received it before accepting the post. He commended the office of the Campus Registrar on whose initiative the booklet was designed and explained that he was instrumental in “tweak[ing it] to suit [his] particular department” (T12LSC,p1,L37-38).

They also described some role-related processes and procedures similar to those described by the administrators. Michael, dean of a large faculty, is of the view that the ‘fitness for purpose’ definition of the Quality Assurance system works for the academics and students especially with the emphasis it has on the quality of teaching and learning. He said, “Quality Assurance works for the academic, it has its value, [it works for] students...yes it has its merits and benefits, [it] allows for set objectives to be met”, (T25DSSCp1,L30-34). The judgment of its success, he claimed,

is the extent to which it assists departments to fulfill the mission and more broadly with the UWI's Mission. He further highlighted that it identifies weaknesses in standards. Though Michael felt that this framework worked, he identified weaknesses. This is what he said,

Not well monitored so...it is more peers, departments, themselves [who make judgments] but not a systematic monitoring of the process, I suppose when they come back in the next review, OBUS does look and see what was recommended last time and say what will be recommended again...needs monitoring, follow-up and dedicated resources for follow-up (T25DSSCp1,L2946).

Anngel also felt that the Quality Assurance Process had a major weakness which had to do with a lack of follow-up. She used this weakness to demonstrate that the UWI did not have a full system of TQM but rather employed some aspects of it such as the inputs which can be measured. She strongly felt that "a lot more would have to go into it [TQM]" than that. For example, she felt that where the system falls down is in the area of follow through and she went on to explain that they are trying to correct this weakness. She said, "What really happens after you measure...which is a big part of TQM, the feedback loop is short and you know it is important that somebody is checking the interventions...that's where we kind of don't do much..." (T1,p1,L18-22).

She further clarified the point by giving an example of a report that her department had to do for the Quality Assurance Review exercise. In this report it specified what the department said that it would do, "...nobody has come back and said, are you doing it, do you need help, how far have

you reached, that sort of thing which would not happen in a TQM because of the measuring. So I guess we have adopted a sort of halfway model...” (T19,p1,L27-32).

### **Management Style and Culture**

The academic staff felt that there was no one management style, “[I] don’t know that one can be described”, (T2HE,p4,L162). Some explained that the styles varied depending on the circumstances.

I guess it’s going to vary. There is no one style that works. There are some things you just have to be autocratic with because there are some people who are just not going to budge unless that axe comes down. But people can be consulted in terms of what they think can work and when you make suggestions and so on it should be taken into consideration. (Tom) (T14CHP,p7,P187192).

A hierarchical structure was described which permitted a certain aloofness and segregation between Senior Executive Management and other staff.

Barry reported that he did not know what the overall management style was but went on to explain that he found the UWI impersonal, a situation, he explained, which did not allow staff to feel as part of the system, he said “[I] never once ever met one of the principals in a forum where you say meet and greet, not the vice chancellors, you see them in the distance so...you don’t feel you know the university”, (T20GG,p6,L238-243]) He made it very clear that this impersonal style did not obtain at the departmental level and offered an explanation that this may be due the fact that his colleagues are considered his peers many of whom had studied

together earlier at the UWI and that they also taught the newer lecturers on staff in his small department.

Michael too was not aware of an overall management style but gave the question serious thought and slowly responded in an effort to capture all that he thought was important for me to note. This is how he and his peers explained the style,

I don't know...Management by Committee. A kind of inertia in our management. I find most of our leaders too complacent at Mona. Led by committee, too bureaucratic, not held accountable...we can and should do much better in working to issues of quality. A lack of responsibility. (T25DSS,p7,L284-288).

It's almost impossible to answer that question...you never heard anything from the Vice Chancellor, then all of a sudden you get this letter from him to say I [the Vice Chancellor] am in charge why don't you do your job. So it's a change of people and style...very much dependent on people's personalities...so there is really no one style. (T19MS,p37, L871-876,882-888,891).

I would say more *laisse-faire*, heavily democratic, but in many instances I think there is a strong *laisse-faire* leaning. I know it is run by committees, which really should be more democratic... (T15SON,p22,L637-645).

Repeatedly, throughout my talk with the academics the issue of a top heavy administration that directed the use of a lot of resources to administration at the expense of faculty and students surfaced. I did not find this alarming or unique at the UWI as this finding is also true of some universities. There also seemed to be a disconnection between staff in administration, and academics in the teaching departments with regard to

pertinent issues that affect each group. This is due partly to non-communication resulting in these two categories not being able to work together but rather at cross purposes. Raymond, who had earlier explained that “the administration thinks that it is the university so everything and everyone else comes in second” (T11MS,p1, L26-29), firmly believed and clearly made the point that the students and the departments are the university, and not the administration. Here are the views as expressed some academics,

Autocratic. Plantocratic. The whole structure is top heavy and very oriented towards administration and management. Not enough focus on academic staff and students. Buildings are going up for administration while we are still using the same old classrooms and bathrooms since 1975. (Bary) (T10LL,p3, L35-38).

The university administration is top heavy, and a lot of resource is being directed or used up by administration... it's a top down management style I'm hoping the new principal will make significant changes in that system, he is aware of problems and I think he has the capacity to make change. (Raymond) (T11MS,p1, L7-8).

Other academics referred to “a top down approach to most things” (T8DDS,p11,L468-469), and, like the administrators, they felt that “...the system is so unwieldy and cannot penetrate point of activity so we have to keep pushing the other, not enough connection with what is on the ground, staff feel disassociated, lethargic” (T12LSC,p3,L42-43). These varied perceptions of the management styles allowed me to better contextualize the discussions concerning the importance of a participative management

style which they explained had recently been the experience on the Mona Campus during the 2006 strategic planning exercise.

I tried to find out whether there was compatibility between the bureaucratic, laid-back, and reactive management styles, and the role-specific processes that faculty described, which were in the main regulatory. The views expressed were mixed. Some believed that there was no compatibility, while others felt there was. Michael felt that there were “Big bureaucracy, lots of committees [therefore] management style is not reflective in us” (T25,p7,L305), and Lisa claimed that “It [the administrative framework] could work with a less autocratic style by motivating people to work by allowing for use of initiative rather than to impose or place them ‘under manners’ [having a firm grip] as is done in...” (T10LL,p3, L42-44). In the discussion with Tom, he put forward a similar view expressed by the administrators that a system of accountability of performance would assure the quality framework through a strengthening of the performance appraisal system. This viewpoint also came out strongly in the section that dealt with workable frameworks in which the challenges and difficulties of performance appraisals were highlighted. Other views were expressed as follows,

I think there might be some conflict between the style and what we are trying to achieve in terms of quality...the system is really not accountability...and we have performance appraisals coming through, certainly I still think there is a lot left to be done in that area. (Tom) (T17CHP,p10,L418-422).



No, no, it's not really a compatible thing. We are trying to change what we inherited which is a top down approach. This year we are having deputy deans and getting the departments to play a greater role...We're trying to broaden the governing structure of the department because...people tend to take a hands-off approach until the thing affects them directly. (Raymond) (T8FSp12,L512-517, 526-527).

I think the bureaucracy as it impacts on human resources slows down the efforts...to improve efficiency...if heads of departments had more power and control over managing human resources...we would be better off but I know that there are checks and balances and that there must be processes and procedures...For...quality, you have to look at the performance of human resources and you'll have to have a more proactive system...(Tom) (T17CHP, p9,L366-380).

There were other faculty members who felt that the management style and the administrative framework are compatible. Stephen, for example, explained that the UWI was able to move forward because of the rules and the structure which he described as the framework. He, like his peers, felt that better management of the human resources is the answer to the effectiveness of the UWI. This is how he expressed his thoughts,

We move within the rules of the university and so our law which is the law of the university makes us a law unto ourselves...The rules of this university are very good rules. The structure of the university is a very good structure. It is the people who translate those rules and make them functional...(Stephan) (T15SON,p29-30L696-706).

The academics shared similar views as the administrators on the culture of the UWI. They too were unable to describe an overall culture but spoke to different cultures that existed including those that are closed, supportive, reactive, knowing the right people in the right places, unwieldy and very bureaucratic, peculiar, grumbling comfort culture, inward focused,

excellence and reactive. During the discussion with Stannard, he occasionally answered his telephone as it was a busy period for him. At the end of one of these calls, I sensed some annoyance while he recollected his thoughts to explain his perception of the culture at the UWI. He started to report the telephone conversation to me and suddenly he realized that the answer to my question resided in that telephone experience. This is what he said,

Over two months she [the caller] must send something from...and she just called me to tell me...foolishness. Oh! that is the culture, it is lax, it is a lot of things, even that [telephone] call...you know, we're always diverting things to other persons. (Stanley) (T8FS, p11,L489-492).

Ingie described the culture as closed and that it did not fit with the autocratic management style which she had earlier discussed. She referred to the participative manner in which the strategic planning process was carried out and wondered whether this participative style would continue with the new principal. During the conversations with the academics, I noted that the management style that they described seemed to be similar to the culture and vice versa which is the shared experience of the administrators. Here is how the academics described the culture.

Closed, needs to be more open and engage in dialogue with staff...[management style] fits [with the culture] as it is autocratic so 'do it, do not ask' but the principal made changes by consulting with staff re the strategic plan, not sure if this will continue with the new principal. (Dane) (TT10LL,p3-4,L132, 138-140).

They also indicated that the culture is changing. Barry discussed a change that is geared towards student-centredness.

First of all the culture...is a very dynamic culture. It's a changing culture, it's a very different culture from the culture that prevailed...I think that staff has become a lot more accessible. There was a time when you could not ask a question in a lecture you couldn't do it as a student you are scared because nobody had time for you. I think staff in general has a lot more time for students there is a greater level of interaction...(T20GG, p6,L250- 262).

Anngel described a "...very inward-focussed culture...we don't look out to the region, I think what you really want is somebody to constantly remind you of the big picture or vision..." (T19MS, p38,L912, 921-923).

Some academics used the image and uniqueness of the UWI to describe the culture. For example, they felt that "[T]he staff and students see themselves as the best as UWI is the cream of the crop, the seat of highest learning even with competition as UWI is the only higher education with specialized disciplines", (T12LSC, p4,L136-139). Academics discussed a democratic culture and used the analogy of "tin gods" and "king makers" to describe a culture in which shared perceptions do not exist but the institution is able to survive as the culture is supportive of it. His colleagues also described a similar culture.

There are too many 'tin gods' in here and too many king makers so where I sit I am the lord of all I survey and no man shall breach my territory. It's almost a thing that gets set up in some sections and departments...When the master is coming everybody get working around that time and when the lord, his master is not there, everybody give a sigh of relief and goes on. In other words, the shared perception does not exist...(Stephan) (T15SON, p28, L568-667).

The academics described a disgruntled culture and pointed out that despite this, staff tends to remain at the institution, this is what Michael said,

Funny culture, grumbling comfort, staff complains but do not leave...the university does not make any demands on them so they are happy but...the place is problematic...Not a threatening place but not a demanding place either...always playing catching up not leap forging...(T25DSS, p7,L291-302).

As I listened to Michael, I recalled that some administrators had also described a similar culture, one where “There is a love/hate relationship between workers and the university...they will tell you that the university is not doing this for me and ...they are not letting go...” (T5OS, p 9-10,L412-415), which led me to think more on Michael’s explanation that since the university’s culture is not one that is demanding, then staff will be content and remain. Other academics felt there are issues that may be worthy of criticism, but they also mentioned that they like working at UWI. One in particular shared that he was not sure if the academic freedom which he enjoys is experienced in administration. He had this to say,

The culture is...for the environment. We do follow some of the traditional which are things that we have held on to overtime. Sometime reactive than proactive...I like UWI, I can criticize it but I also like working at UWI...there’s a lot of what you call academic freedom certainly at the academic level and I’m not sure at the administrative level... (Tom) (T17CHP, p17,L387-392, 493-406).

Lisa echoed the sentiments of the administrators (T21TU,p6,L272-276) in her description of the culture as one that “You have to know the people in the right places...” (T14CHP, p6-7, L153-156, 176-177).

I next discussed with the academics whether or not a fit or compatibility existed between the framework and the culture and it was reported that one did not exist. From all accounts, except in one case, systems, and processes of quality were in place but in most cases they failed to be effective because of lack of leadership at different levels in creating the internal quality environment to match the quality endeavours as indicated in the literature. These are some of the expressions of the academics to the issue of a fit or compatibility.

There is some level of mismatch between the culture and what we are really trying to achieve in terms of quality...its going to take strong leadership to really get to this quality administrative issue...The culture is one where you can get away with under-performing...creative leadership to bring administrative leadership up to par...(Tom) (T17CHP,p19, L424-466).

What behaviours do we reward, what things do we measure... sometimes I think the only people who are being measured are the academics...how are we measuring the people who are in administration. The performance measurement thing is rubbish, it is ridiculous. I'm ashamed of it for a major institution as UWI. So I think that the culture really needs a lot of tinkering...(T19MS,p19,L424-466).

Wielding and very bureaucratic, things move very slowly and especially with the UWI because you have three campuses...no, there is a clash, [with the administrative framework fitting with the culture] there is a contradiction...flexibility is not there. You have committees discussing the problem which are shunted to other sub-committees and...there is no absolute resolution to the issue or problem...too reactive, must be proactive, must identify problems down the horizon and put measures in place to deal with those problems...(Michael) (T11MS,p4,L163-164, 175-180).

## **Criteria for Administrative Quality**

Some academics reported that one of the criteria for administrative quality should reflect the purpose of the university as identified by its mission and vision. Here is what was said,

First of all you have to identify what is the purpose of the university. [it is] established to serve what or to serve whom, and what are the objectives...The university has a mission statement to be the premier institution in the Caribbean and to train future leaders of the Caribbean. How are we preparing them for the job market, how are we preparing them for the world of work. (Raymond) (T11MS,p5, L208-212).

Ideal models must meet the needs of the section that needs it...so people must develop their own models to meet their needs. These models must be generated from the philosophies of the university so if you develop your models and the philosophy of your section out of the university philosophy and with the university's vision, then I don't see where you could go wrong. (Tom) (T17CHP, p31,L734-738).

Academics also discussed criteria relating to the performance of individuals. Ingie, a lecturer in Humanities and Education remarked that the university "Generally needs to get people more focused on getting the job done than for the focus to be on self, so more people-person" She also explained that "performance [is] critical, timely completion of tasks, punctuality, less absenteeism, low turnover of staff" were some of the criteria for administrative quality. (T17CHP,p31, L734-738). When asked about the ideal culture to support the kind of administrative framework Lisa remarked as follows,

...[B]y looking at the survey information, look at the areas where we need to improve and act on them, even things we

don't agree on. We can also look at what other institutions are doing, where they are going, we should be market driven, what is happening in the wider society, what are our competitors doing so we need to listen to our students so that we stay on the cutting edge, we need to seek to get the latest in technology, strategies, we need to improve our teaching and student support..., (T14CHP,p8, L208-209, 221-234).

The academics stated that for administrative quality to be sustained, it requires the implementation of certain ideal management styles, and cultures deemed to be beneficial to staff and students.

The ideal culture would be more like measuring the things we consider to be most important in terms of administrative quality and then what gets rewarded ...dependability that I know that I can depend on the system to function ...reliability that things function the way they are supposed to function...and that we operate as a team...a greater level of cooperation...more consultation...(Anngel (T19MS,p42, L1001-1115,p43, L1015-16, 1119-20, 1030-31, p44, L1037-38)

[An ideal culture] for everyone...for the survival of the institution, [is one that has] flexibility, efficiency and a capacity to identify potential problems and put solutions in place, and see problems in the horizon. (Raymond) (T11MS,p5, L188-191).

Openness, and frank communication...Opportunity for people on the ground to speak and to be taken seriously and see impact of changes then institute better framework to respond to clients...Empower individuals on ground to show sense of seriousness. Part of culture to be rolled into framework... Transparency in terms of recruitment of administrative staff as is done with academic staff. (Dane) (T12LS,p4, L10-23).

Well you are going to need to speak about sustaining it [the ideal culture] but we will have to invest in the kind of human resources and have the right kind of system to sustain it...You are going to have leadership...the culture is changing human resource and then you need the systems that are going to be in place...(Tom) (T17CHP,p10,11, L453-472).

Needs to make those changes in terms of how the top managers see themselves...taking itself up to a level of strategic leadership. Must be engaged in policy formation...establish targets and deadlines and structures of responsibilities...then monitor and ensure that research is being done to analyze issues...need responsible people and hold them accountable for responsibility and exercise that responsibility in terms of measurement and standards. (Michael). (T25DS,p7, L317-327).

### **3. THE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES**

#### **Higher Education Framework**

The students could not answer the question of whether or not higher education frameworks exist on the Mona Campus. They said, "I don't know if it is that there is no framework or they are just not following it. If they seem to be following it, it's on their own bending, you know it's ridiculous" (FG2,p, L595-599). They also expressed that

They are completely inefficient or disorganized, it's like they are just making up the stuff as they go along and using us as guinea pigs, they should have a system made up before they implement the system as opposed to implement the system then work on it as it's being implemented. (FG 2,p4, L92-98)

Not only were they not interested in this issue, they were also quite unaware of the concept of higher education frameworks. I therefore explained the philosophy and tenets of two higher education frameworks, and further engaged them to find out whether they felt that the UWI employed any of them throughout its operations. Some were able to explain that they saw glimpses of TQM as stated,

I see glimpses in the way UWI operates using TQM rather than LiP because I am not aware of staff being constantly trained and retrained. The extent to which TQM is applied



in the university it's like the handbook, it's there but it's not relevant. Every single department in this university has a mission statement on the wall that you can see and it looks like something that fits into that framework. (FG1,p 4,L102-110).

They were very interested in making me aware of their prior perceptions as prospective students of the UWI and emphasized that UWI's prestige and reputation served as the marketing brand which encouraged their application to the institution. They said, "The reputation of the other local universities is not quite up to scratch...and the overseas universities...didn't have exactly what I wanted to do", (FG1,p1, L10-12). Other students said, "The prestige of the university is one of the best...before coming here, I thought that UWI is the number one institution here or in the Caribbean". (FG1,p 15-16, 60-61).

These prior perceptions of the students seem to have been a dream from which they awoke on entering the institution as their explanations imply that the image projected by the UWI is not in keeping with the practice. They explained to me that they felt shortchanged as they encountered inefficiencies in the systems, processes, and procedures employed at the UWI throughout their student life cycle. The student life cycle for them begins at the application stage, through to admissions, registration, examination, and ends for some at graduation. I was led to believe that their explanations of inefficiencies implicitly suggest that there are no frameworks, or if these exist, they are not implemented.

### **Workable Higher Education Frameworks**

Some of the students felt that even though they saw “glimpses” of TQM in some of the operations at the Mona Campus, they expressed that the numerous encounters of inefficiencies that they experienced during their student life cycle was evidence that a higher education framework was not operational as the systems, processes, and procedures were not as efficient as they ought to be. They said, “Well after a while I got the impression that the whole purpose for the administration of the UWI is to impede, yes, and not only that...everything we want to do here there is a block” (FG1p11-12L500-503), “The processes are there, it’s just that they are ineffective” (FG1p22,L665). They also explicitly expressed the view that the training to which the administrators referred did not seem to work as they felt that both the administrators and academics alike were in need of some level of training in customer service especially because they interact with students. This excerpt indicates how their views were expressed,

Students: ...[T]hose lectures who seem to be on the high pedestal who are now having to go through the Instructional Development Unit, there needs to be some customer service training in place for those persons who have to come in contact with us students

Interviewer: In addition to the training in teaching and learning?

Students: Yes, yes they must learn how to address us

Interviewer: Lecturers?

Students: And administrators. You can enter offices on campus and if you don’t look like a professor or a doctor, you did not come in, and if they were even there, they get up and leave to go for lunch without

acknowledging you, yea and you say good morning and its like you are speaking to the wall, I get that all the time, all the time. (FG1,p14,L632-650).

On the matter of the regulations, the students did not seem to share the view put forward by academics concerning the usefulness of these regulatory booklets. They shared with me that the faculty handbooks are confusing, outdated and ambiguous and quite often prevented the smooth operations of their registration process.

They try to give you the handbook that no one reads... I read it and I was still confused and it is sometimes not updated. Even when I went before my course coordinator in my department and the Dean in the faculty responsible for registration and the sub-dean, on the page where the relevant information was, I was seeing one thing and the course coordinator saw another thing, and the sub-dean saw something else (FG1p16,L701-704, 730-744).

I found out that students used the term frameworks when they described the processes and procedures at the Mona Campus. This was also done by the administrators and academics. This is what the students had to say,

The framework is there but ineffective again...I would say the library is one place where I see continuous improvement...I see things getting better in the library...the 24 hours that they have now, I'm finding that excellent, and they have updated the computers, less virus is on it. That is one time I see the university really did something for the students. (FG1,p33,L1015-1019).

They reported on assessment procedures that aim at quality in teaching and learning and which they are encouraged to follow such as the evaluation of the teaching staff and course evaluation but which they claimed made no difference as they felt that in the end nothing changes.

It's a pretence...yeah it's a pretence, but they don't actually implement it. There is a process but it's a pretence process because nothing changes. You take this, you fill out this form, and you evaluate this course and you feel like you are doing something, yeah but it's not practical, nothing happens.... The processes are there it's just that they are ineffective (FG1, p5,L117-123, 138-139).

Some levels of framework exists but these are not effective because you have assessment and you have in-course, you have student representatives but all of that is just a waste of time because they have not implemented any results or findings...the exit surveys, most of them say that the university is just doing these things and nothing is going to come out of it so why fill out the form (FG2,p9,L250-258).

Well I guess it's not working [assessments]...in terms of the framework, each faculty should have some plan, you know like a year's plan or a five year plan or a mission or whatever, but in terms of that I'm not seeing it so maybe it's there but not working or it's just not there. But we're not seeing it...(FG2,p11, L322-328).

These students reported on the high expectations they had of the UWI prior to their acceptance. However after their many encounters with persons, and systems during their student life cycle starting at the application stage, through to graduation, they felt disappointed. Some expressed the view that some processes were efficient and straightforward in a few of the faculties and departments, for example, "...for Social Sciences, I applied and they accepted me before I finished my 'A' levels so I knew what I was doing" (FG2,p13,L380-382), while others expressed frustrations in other sections of the campus due to inefficiencies which they blamed on the lack of working frameworks. Here are their comments,

I expected it to be efficient, so as to get an accurate response where you know where your options are beforehand...I got accepted like the week before classes. I started another school when I got accepted. I had to leave the school and then I came here. (FG2,p13,L374-379).

I think that at times the application forms get lost and I expected mine to be lost as I know of persons whose applications were lost. Well mine was lost anyway and I was tired of calling...then somehow it miraculously appeared. (FG2,p13-14,L390-410).

They reported that there seemed to be a system in place in Examinations section of the Registry which manages the examination and graduation processes. The system, they claimed, is managed by one person, thereby making it not as efficient as it ought to be. Here is what they said

My problem with Examinations is that it rests too much on the shoulders of one individual. There is only one person who can authorize everything and if you can't find him you salt [you have serious problems]... (FG2,p35,L1073-1076).

There is a system but just manned by one person. The system is thereby ineffective again. There is a lot of staff there, there are other staff members there but the manager, the person responsible for that department always wants to do everything himself...yeah [he needs to] delegate more, (FG2,p35,L1081-1086).

It's effective somehow. I mean I've never had a [timetable] clash that wasn't sorted out. Yes,[the process is] straightforward, but you get the examination timetable too late. The third draft comes out too late... (FG2,p36&37,L1128-1144).

They also exclaimed that the graduation process is fairly efficient and that the staff in the Examination section is customer focused. They explained that "I never attended my graduation but I have performed at almost every

graduation, other than my own. It is fairly efficient...(FG1,p2,L45-50).

They also expressed with delight that

You get a nice package, it's timely and it had a lot of information...there is a one-stop graduation where they put everything that you need in the Assembly Hall, they give you a floor plan of the one-stop graduation section... graduation is also run by Examinations so there again, they are very personable people, they operate very efficiently...(FG1,p2-3,L44, 48-62).

I think in the Examinations section the customer service is pretty good, it's just that at the end of the day all decisions rest with just one person, but the customer is more in focus in that process (FG2,p37,L1158-1160).

### **Management Style And Culture**

When the question of management style and culture was posed to the students, they did not readily respond and later explained that they were not familiar with these. Some gave the question some thought, shared their perceptions which corroborate, to some extent, with those of the administrators and academics in my sample but they could not elaborate. A few expressed the view that the management styles were mainly elitist and bureaucratic as presented. This is what they explained,

I would say an elitist type where the administration is the elite and they run things [manage things]...Pretty much it's run based on links, money...politics. Basically who knows whom and who has leverage. Bureaucracy! You cannot step on the wrong toe! (FG1,p10-11,L274-286).

On the issue of the culture, again, the students seemed to lack information on the culture of the Mona campus. Some described it in the same way as they did the management style, they said that it was "elitist and

indifferent...very indifferent” (FG1,p12,L309-312). Others explained that the cultures varied in each department and faculty to the extent that it appeared that there were different universities. Here is what they said,

The fact that each faculty has its own culture means that each administration functions differently and the faculties operate like...three, four separate universities right (FG1,p16,L720-723)

### **Criteria for Administrative Quality**

The students happily answered the question of the criteria for administrative quality. They discussed some changes that were necessary which were in the main the “Communication process” [to make it more] student friendly...so that you don’t have to go across the campus [to get information]”. As they had earlier discussed, they also felt that training was important, “And train these people in just generally speaking to persons”. They discussed a “Democratic and highly communicative” management style that was necessary to support an administrative framework of quality. But it was also felt that “Customer service” “Egalitarian” and “Customer oriented” management styles would help to sustain an administrative framework of quality. (FG1,p11,L296-297,303, p12, L315-318,326-330).

### **ADDITIONAL/SALIENT THEMES**

In discussing the four research questions with the administrators, academics, and students in my sample, other additional and salient themes emerged. These include ownership of quality, staff hierarchy, role shift

and the blurring of roles. From the theme ownership of quality, other sub-themes emerged including issues of communication or the lack of it, resistance to changes, and implementation and monitoring.

### **Ownership of Quality**

The findings from administrators and academics in this case study, suggest that quality is not centrally owned as different departments across the campus adopt different quality approaches. I reflected on *The Report of the Chancellor's Commission on the Governance of UWI, July 1994*, which speaks to the ownership of academic quality residing with the Board for Undergraduate Studies (BUS). The *Report of the Chancellor's Task Force on Governance of the UWI, February 2006* which captured the revisions that were made to the governance structure in 2004 also indicated that BUS was designated the central body to provide quality assessment and control for all undergraduate and sub-degrees. The quality scope was later broadened to include post-graduate degree programmes. These reports corroborate with the perceptions of administrators and academics that the quality mandate is academically focused. For example, they indicated that there was no framework that speaks to administrative quality (T27ADM,p1,L40-44), [T16FIN,p1L13-18], [T24ARC,p4-5,L123-131, T1PD,p5,L209-215). Some administrators however, felt that the current 2007-2012 Strategic Plan, deals with "...administrative quality this time around because of the concerns raised from all the stakeholders to do with quality of the university experience, how they are treated, their



academic programmes, and the processes which are...so difficult”, (T4DP,p6,L244-248). It indicates that the implementation of administrative quality is the central responsibility of the University Registrar.

### **Communication**

Throughout the discussions with the three groups of participants, the issue of communication, or the lack of it also surfaced. These groups indicated that critical information is not shared with pertinent individuals, (T1PD, p1, L19-22), which suggests that from time to time measures are implemented to address problems, without empirical evidence on which to base their actions and from which could ensue greater cooperation and buy-in. The administrators said, “We need to disseminate information better. Some useful studies have been done by OBUS and I think they must get to the right places” (T1PD, p13, L549-558). They further explained,

I don't know that these important things that students have identified, deficiencies, difficulties...have been brought across in such a way that managers need to know that they must do something about them. I have never seen the result of that survey. We deal with the staff that the students think about there and I don't know that Human Resources has ever been written to or brought into the picture to say... What's the purpose of your doing it?... (T1PG,p9,L378-380).

Overall, some of the frameworks perceived by staff that guided their approach to quality seemed to be de-facto and clearly hinge on the implicit notion of the ‘quality’ and ‘excellence’ emphasis as indicated by the

mission statements and former strategic plans. The Quality Assurance initiative of 1996 also seemed to have brought greater focus to quality at UWI. These thoughts were expressed mainly by administrators, (T1PD, p1, L19-22, [T13,BU,p1,L5-11). Even the strategic plans that guide the five-year plans for the institution do not seem to be shared in any meaningful way with pertinent persons who influence changes. The administrators supported this in their statement, “We are trying to communicate with people, we set up pipeline [an internal communication system], let us all plug into that communication system or if that is not going to work, you tell me how best I can communicate with you, but communication is a serious problem” (T7DP ,p5,L153-155). Another example is the Customer Care Charter which Mary, an administrator stated was formally discussed in meetings and on pipeline, (T1PD,pp5,L192-119,232-4) whereas, others claimed that this is not so, (T4DP,p1,L11-14,31-32). The administrators and academics gave an account of how the strategic plan was communicated. The administrators’ account showed that it was presented in a rushed manner, whereas the academics discussed how much it was appreciated when this document was discussed and the ‘buy in’ that was received when deans and heads of departments communicated its relevance with other staff.

The problem with the strategic plan is a problem we are talking about for years ever since we started this strategic thing. Lovely plan but not brought to the attention of the staff in the way it should...we were all referred to it... when we were going on our retreat...and had to read those

upteen [many] pages quickly and prepare something for a presentation...(T1PD,p6L241-246).

I am taking it seriously. I have a meeting with my staff every year, the whole faculty and...of course not everything in the plan is a priority for the faculty...so we...took it down to one page... all persons in the faculty are invited even those who have retired, (T25DSS,p3L118-129).

With reference to how student surveys and evaluations are handled, it seemed that information is not generally communicated with pertinent stakeholders, especially the students, who are involved in the process.

I think the issue is with the person who gets the information and what we do with it after so we have to ensure that we use the information in a meaningful way and we engage the students...we have to be in touch with the people we serve and let them know that we are addressing their concerns, (T27UR, p4,L143-147).

The surveys feed into the policy that come out of OBUS, you know part of what we do is about policy...but it also feeds into action so I believe we do use the information, whether we use information effectively as we could is another question...(T21TU,p7,L298-306).

First report seen was from the 'secret survey' that the deputy principal conducted in 2006. It sought the experiences of student as they engaged in the operations of various departments which were ranked according to performance...At first, I felt that the department was intruded upon, (T12LSC,p2,L42-52).

Participants in all three categories discussed the importance of sharing information from surveys and evaluation reports. William, an administrator explained that "The issue is with the person who gets the information, what we do with it after so we have to ensure that we use the

information in a meaningful way and we engage the students...”

(T27UR,p4,L143-147). Barry, a lecturer, exclaimed

[I] think we need to advise students of the value of these surveys and what we do with them...the university probably does not make them aware of what happens in response to these surveys...provide feedback from these surveys to the students...(T20GG,p5,L192-197).

The students corroborated the above statement. They also stated that there is tardiness in communicating important decisions and indicated that communication was worse for those students who resided off campus.

The general view of students was , “Every year they have student evaluation, but it doesn’t change anything. It does absolutely nothing...you go through the evaluation process but you don’t get the results” (FG1,p12,L518-524). Others suggested, (FG2,p9,L250-258)

There was a day when there was no water on campus but we didn’t get that information. Yes it was sent out through pipeline but most of us don’t have computers and internet at home...they insist that we must use pipeline, but pipeline is inaccessible most times and off campus.(FG1,p10,L428-434).

I’ve done all courses required for two majors and I am still not aware what will appear on my degree, that’s a question I have been asking for two years and I still have not [received] an answer from them. (FG1,p14,L629-632)

## **Implementation**

The findings suggest that effective implementation of processes and systems was also negatively affected by issues of non-communication, the informal design of training which impacts the change processes, and a lack of ownership of the quality problem. For example, the informal design of

the training and orientation framework and the non-communication of it impacted negatively on the academic staff and senior administrators in academic departments, especially as it concerned the attitudes and values of this group of staff. Staff members in general did not seem to be aware of who owns the quality problem and this affected the support that was given. For example, it was reported by Mary that the training exercise carried out by Human Resources department was not supported especially by the academics, (T1PD, p1, L36-40, 67-71). From all indications, it would seem that these staff would have preferred and appreciated open discussions, as was done in the process of the Strategic Planning exercise of 2006 to determine how the quality problem could be solved. In lieu of this kind of engagement, staff might have felt that a decision for training was imposed upon them resulting in a reimplementation of the strategy.

From the findings, I believe that the heads of departments did not find it comfortable to sit in training with other levels of staff when they requested similar training from the department that handled their particular concerns and sat with their peers at an off-campus venue for training. As a result of the non support from the academic staff, the training programme was re-designed to attract this specific group of staff, to stem the problem of customer care breaches as reported by the administrators, (T1PD,p2,L72-79, 432-443).

### **Staff Hierarchy**

The findings indicated that a hierarchy exists at the UWI. Throughout the interviews, administrators and academics in the faculties endeavoured to project themselves higher in the hierarchy than the other. It was as if it was important for each of these categories to protect their space, position, and boundary. The messages from these two categories served to inform me on which ‘side of the fence’ they belonged. This contributed to the resistance by the heads of departments and deans to the training exercise, and their subsequent requests for off-site training. It also suggests that this group of staff members wanted to be treated differently from other staff as was the practice, (T1PD,p2,L,81-91). Administrators, felt that the academics think they “know it all”, while the academic staff tended to diminish the role of the administrators as one that merely supports their own important role of what the university is all about, (T11MS,p1, L29-29), (T20GG,p6, L239-243). A lecturer made it very clear to me that he is not an administrator, (T20GG,p1,L6-9). The academics also said that the “Human Resources department should offer training for different levels of staff” (T10LL,p2L85).

Anngel corroborates the responses of the students in her explanation that a greater level of cooperation is needed between faculty and administrators, she said “right now we seem to be divided into camps, and the fact, is without the academics nothing can happen because the students come to the university to learn and we are the ones to help them to do that” but she

also recognized that this task is a joint effort, by saying, “but we also need to know that without the support team, you know, unless I want to do every...thing myself, then that also is not going to happen”, (T19MS,p44L1030-1034).

### **Monitoring**

Throughout the discussions with administrators and academics the issue of supervision and monitoring was an explicitly theme that constantly reoccurred, (T7DP,p2,L53-57), (T1PDp12L510-513). Administrators involved in management of the human resources said,

We have over 200 of our administrative and technical frontline staff that deals with the public, who are trained in Quality Customer Care and we have seen improvements in terms of attitude, approach...you need to have reinforcement, you need to retrain and support these people out there because the customers they face, the students... do make life difficult for them and you have to retrain... (T1PD,p3,L132-139).

They further emphasized the need for close monitoring that should follow training and indicated the approach that the UWI intends to take “to determine initially what are your training needs, why you need this thing, what is the deficiency that you have detected in your own operations...so you are not sending somebody on training simply because training is going on” (T1PD,p12,L523-528). To this end, they informed me that the department was in the process of designing a monitoring system to monitor customer care on the campus which will better prepare the department to work in tandem with other departments to monitor

performance subsequent to training and to determine training needs accordingly.

### **Blurring of Roles/Role Shifts**

From the discussions with administrators and academics, it repeatedly came across that faculty should be allowed to focus on carrying out the core functions of teaching and research without the added pressures of administrative duties. Some discussed their love for teaching and expressed a desire to return to the classroom full-time after their tenure as dean came to an end. They said “the practice to move academics to administration and then switch again should not be the norm” (TLSC, p3,L30-32). Instead, they explained that the institution should have administrative leaders and academic leaders. Administrators felt that it was not ideal “...to put academic heads to run departments and units without preparing them”, (T27UR, p4,5,L180). In the following strip of talk, an academic adamantly expressed his view on the issue and was optimistic that the new principal, whom he claimed was aware of the problems, would make significant changes in this regard.

Interviewee: Academics cannot be administrators, they are not that oriented eh?

Researcher: So a lecturer (cuts me off)

Interviewee: Is a researcher, is a researcher (expressed in strong tones)

Researcher: [I continued] So a lecturer coming up the line and becomes a dean that makes him an administrator right? What would make him or her more efficient as an administrator, because that is the progression for upward mobility



Interviewee: Have all of our deans been successful? Go back in history and look at all our deans and tell me how successful they were  
Researcher: How would you suggest that they do to become better administrators?  
Interviewee: No! You get administrators from outside...other university do this and let the academics do what they are here to do, research and teach (T11MS,p4L146-159).

The findings revealed that not only was there recognition of a blurring of the roles for managers and administrators, but also that the boundaries were not as clear cut as they ought to be and the academics sought to distinguish between them as indicated below.

UWI managers describe themselves as administrators but administrators do not problematize what they are doing. An administrator runs a system, a manager has a slightly different job and must be engaged in change, shifting resources. So we have an administrative system and an overlay of committees and we have top management...taking leave decisions which human resources should do within a policy...the leader needs to see the analysis, meet with the captain of industry and pick their pockets, (T25,p7,L305-314).

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The findings indicate that higher education frameworks do not exist on the Mona Campus. Total Quality Management (TQM) might have been the thinking some time ago as the participants in my sample explained that seminars and workshops on TQM were conducted but they were unable to describe its implementation. This might have been the reason too that a few of them were able to discuss aspects of TQM being utilized in some of the varied role-specific processes and procedures that they described and which they explained guided them in their approach to quality. Others

strongly objected to its relevance to higher education and to the UWI in particular. Following on this, the general question about the applicability of higher education frameworks was therefore not answered. Those participants who recalled the conduct of TQM seminars and workshops, as well as those who felt that some tenets of TQM was evident in their role-specific processes did however feel that TQM was not applicable to higher education in general and to the UWI in particular. Despite this, participants explained the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of their role-specific procedures and processes in terms of whether or not they worked. Those that did not work or worked to some degree were those that lacked leadership and commitment, and monitoring and follow-up mechanisms. From the complaints received from students through the annual students' surveys, which corroborate with views of the students who participated in the Focus Group studies. The findings also indicated that there is a quality problem but this problem does not appear to be properly articulated.

The findings also revealed that there are different role-specific processes and procedures that guide administrators as against those that guide academics. Administrators described administrative systems, processes and procedures that lend support to the academic functioning of the UWI. They referred to standards-based operations such as the Customer Service Charter, which guides training and orientation, staff development systems, performance appraisal system, assessment of faculty by students, the aims of the mission, the objectives of the strategic plans, and the Quality

Assurance System. However, when it came to academics and students, they focused mainly on regulatory systems such as faculty booklets, and examinations regulations. The academics also described documents that guide heads of departments in their work, and the Quality Assurance System.

The findings led me to believe that there is also a clear indication that the role-specific processes, and procedures described fell under two broad initiatives undertaken at the UWI in the 1990s. These are Academic Quality Assurance, and Strategic Planning which gave new meaning to UWI's Vision and Mission. These, along with the TQM philosophy which was introduced through the conduct of various workshops and seminars some years ago, seem to be the foundation of any kind of quality structure.

Participants could not describe an overall management style and culture and explained that these varied at the university. They include styles that are autocratic and top-down, closed bureaucratic, laid-back and reactionary, personality-based. Students in particular were not fully aware of the management style and culture at the UWI. They identified these as elitist and bureaucratic but were unable to elaborate on these. All participants described management styles some of which were similar to the culture. The views were also mixed on issue of whether there was a fit or compatibility between the management styles and cultures and also the

effect this had on administrative quality. It was felt that whenever such a fit did not exist, it negatively affected administrative quality.

All participants in my sample were able to share their perceptions with regards to the criteria for administrative quality and the ideal culture for its sustainability. These criteria were similar to the additional and salient themes which emerged during the discussions and were mainly in keeping with issues of committed leadership and management that cut across different aspects of the resources of the institution, and its effect on the effectiveness and efficiency of management processes, and procedures in support the core functions of the UWI. Chapter 5 will discuss and analyze these findings, chart the way forward, and conclude the research.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Over the past ten years, quality as a main strategic objective has been reflected in the Strategic Plans at the UWI. The present strategic plan for 2007/2012 envisions building excellence in the core activities of the University namely: teaching and learning; graduate studies, research and innovation and lastly outreach. One major enabler in achieving excellence is the transformation of the leadership and administrative culture along with processes that would make the UWI more student-centred (Strategic Plan 2007-2012, 2008). This involves, to a great extent, senior administrators who are expected to drive these current strategic aims. The discussion in this chapter, along with the recommendations and conclusion focus on the following relevant points: for the Mona Campus. 1) UWI Role-Specific Quality Management Procedures 2) UWI's Implicit Framework of Quality, 3) The implications of UWI's management style and organizational culture on Quality, 4) Interpretation of administrative quality. I discuss these findings and their implications from the perspectives of the three embedded case studies of the Administrators, Academics, and Students, some of whom are policy and decision makers, implementers, and users of administrative frameworks.

## **UWI'S ROLE-SPECIFIC QUALITY MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES**

It was evident from the data that none of the established higher education frameworks were being utilized on the Mona campus of the UWI thus it was difficult for the research participants to describe their administrative practice in a very structured way. Participants, however, recognized the existence of a set of practices within the governance structure that assured quality management, and which they described as frameworks. I found it interesting that the different groups within my sample viewed quality management frameworks in contrasting ways. Administrators described different practices, procedural manuals and guides that lend support to the academic functioning of the Mona Campus and they had a tendency to reference standards-based documents such as the customer service charter, which guides training and orientation. Furthermore, administrators referred to procedures and systems such as the Staff Training Development System, the Performance Appraisal System, the assessment of faculty by students, the aims of the mission, and the objectives of the strategic plans. However, when it came to academics and students, they focused mainly on regulatory systems such as faculty booklets, examinations regulations, manuals that guide heads of departments in their work. Both the administrators and academics described the Quality Assurance System as the academic framework of quality. The findings also revealed that administrative frameworks do not interest the students as, not only were they unaware of what these were, they were also more

interested in experiencing a quality student-centred environment during their student life cycle than discussing a particular framework that would guide such experiences.

### **Aspects of Total Quality Management**

I found it alarming that senior administrators in administrative and academic departments who are expected to meet the quality objectives of the strategic plans were not aware of a structured approach to quality management at the UWI. They found it difficult to identify any existing frameworks and often had to be prompted before considering higher education frameworks such as TQM. They, however, discussed with me the importance of a formal framework to guide them in their approach to quality and some administrators in particular articulated the need for a formal framework to guide them in giving quality service to the non-academic support functions in the same way that quality assurance is designed for teaching and learning. The fact that the more senior professional and academic administrators were able to recall being involved in TQM seminars and workshops but could not describe its implementation, implies that no formal training was received for this framework to be implemented and sustained. My continuous exploration of the literature has caused me to realize that the role-specific procedural manuals and guides that administrators and academics described seem to reflect, to some extent, the TQM philosophy which was the thinking at the UWI some years ago. The higher education framework that was

identifiable, to some extent, in some of UWI's operations was TQM.

These findings reflect the claim made by Hall (1996) that many of the features of TQM have always been present in higher education. At the same time, administrators and academics felt that TQM as an entire framework was not applicable to higher education and the UWI.

Apart from a few noticeable tenets of TQM, the major role-specific quality practices which participants described as frameworks were found to be ineffective mainly because the leadership lacked commitment, accountability, monitoring and follow-up which negatively impact performance. The lack of monitoring and follow-up of staff in the procedures-based model used at the UWI were major weaknesses which arose throughout the entire discussions and which has caused me to interpret this as a major inhibitor to any effective management process. In view of these management processes, a question arises as to whether or not the performance appraisal system, in particular can be described as a quality management system. My arguments to this are two-fold. On the one hand, if quality assurance is about values and the culture of an organization, it is usually difficult to set standards and targets unless persons are trained and as was discovered at the UWI, training in the use of performance appraisal is not given much priority by critical users. On the other hand, quality assurance systems usually require appraisals and assessments which are based on standards as is the case with the annual performance appraisals. If it is that they are regarded as quality assurance



systems, then the issue is how effective are they? As was discussed above, the performance appraisal system falls short of being effective due to lack of commitment, training, monitoring and follow-up on the part of the institution.

### **Regulatory Framework**

The regulatory procedures described by academics and students are not unique to the UWI as they regulate behaviour and performance as is common to most universities. These however may not be considered as part of a quality system, as quality systems impact the culture of an organization and require intensive training in an effort to change mindsets. Attempts at achieving this aim are the training in customer service and the setting up of the Instructional Development Unit (IDU). It was noted that the IDU offers pedagogic training to academic staff members to enrich the kinds of quality instruction and assessment required for the specific kind of student output envisaged for the world of work.

### **Quality Assurance System**

Except for the lack of follow-up and monitoring mechanisms with respect to the recommendations put forward by the review team, the quality assurance system was described by the administrators and academics as an effective framework that ensures quality in teaching and learning. I found it interesting to hear administrators explain that they were expected to give quality service but were not provided with the necessary guidance and

they therefore called for a framework, similar to a quality assurance system that could better guide the administrative arm of the UWI.

I believe that these role-specific procedures described by the participants have some vestigial ‘quality practices’ which seem to have been driven by two sources: 1) stakeholders demands for greater efficiency, transparency, and accountability, and 2) the competitive environment within which the UWI operates. Based on the timeframe of these quality practices, they seem to come out of three broad initiatives at the UWI which lay the foundation for quality; 1) Academic Quality Assurance, 2) UWI’s Strategic Plan, and 3) the TQM philosophy. The quality thrust was enhanced through a deepening of the Vision and Mission, and the objectives of the strategic plans. Since the implementation of these quality initiatives which were introduced in the nineties, not much has been done in terms of translating the ideas and strategies into meaningful actions. A possible explanation is that all these quality initiatives seem unrelated and are incongruent with each other. Effective leadership is critical in indicating to the Mona campus community how each of these quality systems fit in with the overall quality thrust. Further, an explicit, integrated and structured quality approach ought to be developed to better guide staff members. From the findings, it is questionable whether the inherited colonial framework has impacted on the effectiveness of these quality initiatives.

## **Colonial Framework**

An outdated colonial framework inherited from the plantation-style culture was interpreted by some academics as the existing framework at the UWI. This perception is based on UWI's affiliation with the University of London in the early years which saw the adoption of many of the systems, practices, attitudes and cultures of that institution some of which still remain. The claim that the inherited colonial legacy still connects the UWI to the colonial past is arguable. On the one hand, if the claim is analyzed based on the history and evolution of the UWI, a shedding of much of the colonial legacy has taken place and this trend is continuing. For example, the UWI broke its dependence on the University of London in 1963 when it was granted a Royal Charter. This was to ensure that the peoples of the Commonwealth Caribbean, through their own strength and stamina, ability and dignity, were prepared to manage and operate their own independent university. Further independence from the University of London took the form of on-going staff development which encouraged critical thinking in research, publication, and consultancy. This resulted in a culture of voluntarism in public service whereby important contributions have been made by UWI members of staff to nation-building across the Commonwealth Caribbean. Added to this, an emerging consultative management style was experienced where major stakeholders across the campus community participated in the strategic planning process; this occurred in 2006 for the very first time. This is another attempt at

shedding the authoritarian top-down approach which is embedded in the post colonial culture. Staff members with long tenure who are actively involved in the decision-making change processes, as well as new and younger recruits whose experience is the 'here and now' would argue in this way. Others may identify vestiges of colonial influences and would wish to argue otherwise. Further research might be required to examine the extent to which the UWI is still connected to its colonial legacy, and whether this has impacted on its service offerings. This however is beyond the scope of this research.

### **UWI's Implicit Framework of Quality – The Strategic Plans**

The data suggests that the implicit quality framework at UWI over the past decade has been the objectives of the strategic plans which first came into effect in 1997. Two of these objectives have emphasized some student-centred initiatives and quality in teaching and learning. The 2007-2012 Strategic Plan explicitly speaks to administrative quality through a cultural transformation. It also addresses the ownership of, and solution to, the quality problem, a problem which needed swift redress as the current strategic plan now acknowledges. "Ownership" of quality resides at the centre which has implications for sustainable implementation of a structured quality framework. It was noted that the former and present strategic plans at the UWI have not been fully implemented into the operations of the UWI as they should. This was the next critical step that should have been carried out following on the all-inclusive effort to

include all stakeholders in the design of the current strategic plan. Aside from the management and senior officers of the UWI who have bought into the strategic plan, the overall “buy-in” was insufficient.

### **Quality as Transformation**

The administrators and academics in this research maintain that the UWI requires management frameworks that are responsive to 21st Century demands to which should be tied staff promotion criteria, and student-centredness initiatives. This framework should therefore be built around effective leadership that is proactive rather than crisis reactive. It has been argued that quality ought to be based on transformation (Middlehurst 1997; Harvey & Knight 1996; Thackwray and Hamblin 1996; Sallis 2002), especially as it was found to be more applicable to higher education since it does not require external assessments (Thackwray and Hamblin 1996). In this regard, the UWI’s 2007-2012 Strategic Plan aligns with the literature as its overall aim is to transform the institution. It has also been argued that transformational leadership is necessary to transform higher education institutions (Burns 1978; Bass 1985, cited in Middlehurst and Gordon 1995; Smith et al 1999). This type of leadership at the UWI would serve to enhance the transformation thrust and deepen the cultural transformation process especially at this particular stage in its quality development. For example, quality at the UWI has evolved from assurance to enhancement and empowerment through student-centred teaching and learning endeavours.

In my discussion with the administrators, academics, and students, some unexpected additional themes evolved which will be discussed in the proceeding section.

## **UNEXPECTED ADDITIONAL THEMES**

### **Implementation Issues**

All participants identified non-communication, lack of monitoring and follow-up, lack of effective training, as leadership issues affecting sustainable implementation of quality endeavours. For example, the implementation process for customer service training could have been carried out to better advantage had substantial and detailed communication been carried out through campus-wide discussions with all major stakeholders with a view to deciding on an amicable solution. In this way, the problem would be everybody's concern and greater "buy-in" would have been received. The literature points to the implementation of changes being perceived as an imposition, rather than as part of a culture change when such changes are not communicated and explained (Green 1997). This is in keeping with the findings which suggest that there was less than full support to the customer care training on the campus despite various attempts by the Human Resources Department to implement training when the necessary buy-in was not received. Sustainable implementation of quality endeavours requires monitoring and follow-up mechanisms (Ford et al. 1996). On the Mona Campus these were lacking

with respect to the development and subsequent performance of staff members. Added to these shortfalls, an evaluation of the effectiveness of the training is also a necessary exercise especially subsequent to ten years of implementation. These shortfalls, in scope and breadth, undermine the effectiveness of these quality procedures and therefore served as a means to an end.

### **Staff Hierarchy**

The findings revealed that a divide exists among different grades of staff member. This could have been as a result of the hierarchical structure of the UWI, and the top-down management approach which generated certain tensions. The findings showed that the divide was notable between, the Vice Chancellor and academics; administrators and academics; and between departments and across the various faculties. This might also have caused a ripple effect on staff members in general who have not been able to connect with the students. This is not in keeping with the literature which indicates regular interaction among top administrators, students and other stakeholders (Howe and Newton 2000). A recurring theme from the perspective of the academics had to do with a top heavy administration which placed uneconomical burdens on UWI's finances and which diverted the use of resources to administration at the expense of academics and students. I did not find this alarming or unique to the UWI as this finding is also common in most universities. It does however suggest a lack of communication on issues of resource allocation.

The management of financial resources seems to be an issue resulting in a staff divide, with administration on one hand, and faculty on the other.

The tension from the perspective of the administrators had to do with how their supportive roles were perceived by the academics as not comparable to the core functions of the UWI. The students felt that neither of these two categories served their interest as they ought to.

### **Training and Development**

Training and development for leadership positions was lacking at the UWI, Mona Campus. The research revealed that academics aspired for senior leadership positions in administration which were made available to them. It also indicated that though these academics did not necessarily welcome this trend, it nevertheless progressed accordingly. The trend of not empowering aspiring leaders has been to the detriment of effective leadership especially as the policy of the UWI does not mandate that these aspiring academic staff members are trained for the administrative positions to which they are appointed. Howe and Newton (2000) make specific reference to the UWI in this regard.

The findings pointed to a general staff training policy for tertiary education which is available to all staff and their dependents. It enhances staff development but does not always align with, or reflect the needs of the institution as the decision to develop one's self is left entirely up to the individual staff members. In view of the thrust for greater quality on the



Mona campus, it is important that this policy is revised to ensure that the needs of staff members and the institution synchronize.

### **UWI'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE: A REFLECTION ON ITS MANAGEMENT STYLE AND CULTURE**

Of the varied management styles and cultures at the UWI, a top-down authoritarian style and culture was noted as the most dominant which is reflective of the inherited top-down authoritarian and inflexible organizational structure. In recent times, this structure has seen incremental changes with a change in the leadership. As mentioned earlier, transformational leadership at the UWI is envisioned to deepen the cultural transformation process. Howe and Newton (2000) suggest a site-based management structure for the UWI, one which is guided by a transformational calibre of leadership which they see as suitable for the UWI. This type of leadership is necessary especially as the findings suggest that UWI now requires “quantum leap” changes as a means of “catching up”. Their recommended site-based management structure would allow faculties and departments to have the necessary authority to readily respond to the challenges from below without undue influences from central administration as put forward by Clarke (2004); Shattock (2003). Since the findings indicated that the management style influences the culture of the organization, this change in leadership is envisaged to bring about a similar change in the culture making them compatible in order to deepen the quality thrust.

### **Interpretation of Administrative Quality**

The three units of analysis in my research put forward some commentaries for administrative quality at the UWI and the 'ideal' culture for its sustainability which allowed me to make certain interpretations of what administrative quality meant to them. The varied criteria shared cover the issues in the first three research questions which are related to leadership, the management and development of human resources, issues that relate to implementation, communication, and the effects of these on the effectiveness and efficiency of the management systems, processes, and procedures that support the core functions of the UWI. These interpretations of administrative quality align with the current strategic plan as it seeks to transform the administrative culture and processes at the UWI. The 2007-2012 Strategic Plan will propel the transformation framework that will address the school-wide issues and which will serve to complement the quality assurance system that addresses class-room issues for a holistic quality environment. This concept is in keeping with Hanson's (1985) Interacting Spheres Model (ISM) (illustrated in figure 2.2).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS - THE WAY FORWARD**

The findings from this research have implications for practice at UWI, especially in light of the vision of transforming the administrative culture and processes on the Mona campus as indicated in the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan. In view of the findings, it seems appropriate to infer that The UWI in general and the Mona campus in particular, have made strides towards the thrust for greater quality and also for its continued and improved efforts at strategic planning and for the dedication to the achievements in the Action Plans. The Strategic Plan contains many good practices some of which can be deepened in the process of improving administrative quality at UWI.

## **TRANSFORMATION – UWI’S ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK OF QUALITY**

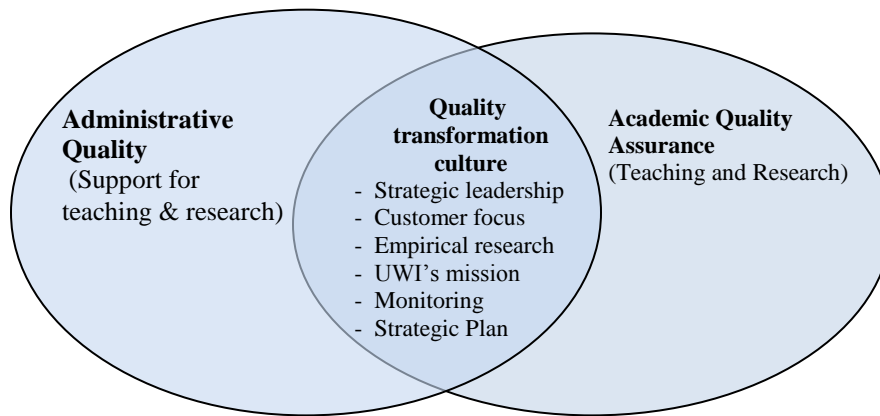
Sustained efforts in building greater quality in the culture at the UWI have been futile. In most cases what the UWI seems to carry out is dramaturgical compliance which, over-time, results in a return to the status quo as sustainability is not guaranteed in implementation endeavours. In addressing the broader higher education context, Goffman (1971, cited in Barrow 1999, p. 32) speaks to this concept. Urgent measures therefore need to be taken in order to implement and sustain this quality thrust through a framework of transformational quality. The main concern noted in the research is that a quality framework has not been articulated; efforts at this have been piecemeal without any sustained monitoring and

assessment practices. Participants in the study identified several criteria for administrative quality some of which are of relevance to this research: strategic leadership, culture change, sustained training and development, monitoring of standards, communication, and implementation. These are tenets of a transformational framework which must be guided through transformational leadership. Such leadership is critical in indicating to the Mona campus community how the different quality procedures and systems fit in with the overall quality thrust and, by extension, an explicit, integrated, and structured quality approach ought to be developed in policy to better guide staff members.

**Recommendation 1:** In view of this, UWI needs to first receive full “buy-in” for the current Strategic Plan. It would have been to greater advantage had the UWI appointed the facilitators who were involved in think-tank groups with the stakeholders to be the on-the-ground champions in marshalling administrative and academic departments. This would have allowed for greater “buy-in” into the concept of the plan and would have sought to clarify, articulate and integrate the Strategic Plan as the comprehensive quality framework especially as it speaks to administrative quality. Thereafter, it is important to develop the necessary accountability measures with built-in rewards as an incentive for implementation for transformation. It is hoped that this framework might mirror the current academic quality model and intersect with it effectively to ensure that administrative quality is defined, measured, and achieved. The design of

an “Administrative Quality Intersection Framework:” (see Figure 5.1), captures the concept of quality as transformation as the “UWI Way”.

**Figure 5.1: Administrative Quality Intersection Framework:  
“The UWI Way”**



It is considered the desired option as it takes into account quality which speaks to administrative issues, as distinct from class room issues of teaching, learning, and research to which the academic quality assurance framework focuses. The recommended Strategic Planning framework must be institutionalized in policy to replace the piecemeal efforts of quality, contribute to holistic implementation, carry forward the UWI's intent to monitor and improve its offerings through excellent customer service and staff performance, and complement the academic quality assurance system which is well underway for the creation of a holistic quality environment.

## **Culture Change**

**Recommendation 2:** It is important that UWI begins the process towards developing a management culture that is less personality driven and more respectful of structures and regulations with some degree of flexibility. This, of course, should be embedded in a larger culture shift in the way the university respects quality and strives to continually improve quality in all dimensions of its work. The strategic plan refers to a “University [UWI] Way” through an institutional philosophy, to be obtained by “buy-in”, which aims at motivating staff to strive for excellence in performance. Alongside this very important strategy, however, there ought to be relevant performance indicators. They would provide important measures of achievements to be reported and discussed at the next mid-way evaluation in August 2010. The findings suggest that “buy-in” was sought by senior management to draw different stakeholders from a wide cross-section of the university community together in several fora during the strategic planning exercise in 2006. It is important that this all- inclusive engagement practice continues.

It was noted in the STRIDE (Strategic Transformation for Relevance, Impact, Distinctiveness and Excellence) presentation to Council in April 2009 that the UWI intends to effect the administrative, managerial, leadership and culture changes through system transformation. The Annual Report for the Mona Campus for 2007-2008 reports on some

strategic student-centred transformation which began on the campus in the 2007/2012 academic year and which saw the implementation of administrative systems and processes in key service areas. Alongside this, a recommended formal staff-centred approach is for UWI to develop a sense of urgency in building capacity especially in the preparation and training of potential leaders to positions of leadership. The development of a coaching system would further advance this cause. This system should include rotation of responsibilities for potential leaders in administrative departments/unit/centres to other departments/units/centres at least for one-year intervals in order for them to garner and hone the necessary experiences and leadership skills. This should be matched by training and development opportunities as stated in the Action Plan, in leadership and management for potential administrative and academic leaders. Performance appraisals during this internship period should be formative rather than summative.

### **Ownership of quality- implementation and training**

**Recommendation: 3.** Student surveys point to an urgent need for sustained training in quality customer care, which is currently being implemented by the Human Resource Department, a department which seems to be in crisis in relation to training and implementation of Quality Customer Care. Other issues emerge from this point. First, it begs the question of who actually owns administrative quality. From all indications, it would seem that the Human Resources Department of the

Registry has been given “ownership” of training in quality customer care but the university community is not all on board with this. This has affected its implementation as reflected in the low participation of senior staff in the Quality Customer Care training exercises. The training might have worked to better advantage if there were effective communication and feedback on this issue with the different stakeholders, prior to implementation where decisions about performance based on pertinent data, including student and staff surveys, were taken into account with a view to developing an action plan to resolve the issue. This process should now be undertaken. Thereafter, frequent communication, monitoring, follow-up and feedback, between the Human Resources Department, in collaboration with the heads of departments, would now be required for effective implementation. Recognition for administrative quality would not only be an important incentive to individuals and departments, but would also serve to build a quality environment and further deepen the quality thrust.

Senior management on the campus is aware that customer care cannot be seen in isolation but as part of the total organizational culture and this is emphasized in the current strategic plan as well. What must be realized is that culture change is a slow process but certainly one that must be sustained through continual training, monitoring, and evaluation and feedback. Immediate priority has to be placed on two areas in the first instance: customer service, and mandatory training in performance



appraisal for heads/directors of administrative and academic departments, including deans. This training must be matched with regular and regularized appraisal of academic staff in tandem with the appraisal of administrative staff which is already in place. With the thrust of greater quality awareness especially since the 1990s, the UWI needs to embrace these concerns with greater urgency in order to address the ad hoc means of assessing performance for example, and hold non-committed heads of departments accountable for their role in the process.

### **OTHER AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

During the process of this research changes have been made at the UWI in general, and the Mona campus in particular, in line with the 2007/2012 Strategic Plan. It is therefore pertinent for future research to be undertaken to evaluate these changes, using perhaps the findings of this study as part of data gathering and as a baseline to measure such progress. Further research might also be required to examine the extent to which the UWI is still connected to its colonial legacy, and whether this has impacted on its service offerings.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research demonstrated that administrative quality has been incidental at the UWI Mona Campus mainly because a comprehensive and integrated quality framework has not been articulated. Though some tenets of Total Quality Management were evident to some extent in UWI's procedures, it is not considered applicable especially as the stage of UWI's quality development calls for much more than the incremental changes that TQM offers. For example, much emphasis has been placed on assuring quality in the core functions of the UWI which has set the stage for a deepening of the quality culture. The recommended approach to quality management is best explained through the utilization of an eclectic framework with quality assurance on the one hand working on the core functions of the UWI, and administrative quality transformation on the other hand which focuses specifically on visionary leadership, strategic planning, and commitment. Both are embedded in the present strategic plan and offer an institutional-wide approach to quality and a deepening of the quality ethos at the UWI Mona. Effective implementation and inculcation of the strategic plan as the framework at the Mona Campus of the UWI should provide a better guide for administrators in their approach to quality especially as the plan speaks to transforming the administrative culture at the UWI. This transformation might be much easier for the following reasons:

- the role-specific procedures at the UWI are already geared towards quality
- the UWI community has repeatedly called for a total quality transformation
- senior leadership has bought into quality assurance and the current strategic plan
- there has been a ‘changing of the guards’ with respect to the calibre of leadership resulting in a shedding of the colonial past, and with that a more participative approach to decision-making
- the quality of the UWI’s offerings is assured through the Quality Assurance System which has paved the way for a deepening of the quality initiative

The enabling administrative focus of the Strategic Plan would complement the quality assurance system and offer a holistic quality environment for its stakeholders. It is hoped that administrators on the other campuses at the UWI will make use of this eclectic quality framework in support of the core functions upon which higher education is designed. It is also hoped that administrators in other higher education institutions might wish to adapt the findings of this case study to fit their particular circumstances and context. This eclectic quality framework not only addresses quality of the academic offerings, but it also addresses the leadership and administrative culture. The particular framework for quality that a university may adopt could arguably be dictated by its philosophy. At the UWI there is an understanding that academic staff need to take a three-pronged approach to their work. This involves teaching, research and outreach, each of which should receive one third of the time. In the context of the UWI for example, when the philosophy of the higher education institution does not align itself with a particular framework, and

where market influences determine its focus (especially in public universities), an eclectic framework seems appropriate. On the other hand, those higher education institutions whose philosophical orientation may be aligned to a particular framework, and where the institution is not led by intense market forces, (as is obtained in some private institutions) then an eclectic framework may not be appropriate.

Several matters need to be addressed to move the UWI, Mona Campus forward in a transformational mode. These are: a) proper implementation of the existing Strategic Plan 2012, b) more flexible organizational structures which afford accountability and systems that support excellence, c) transformation of culture as the inherited personality driven model of the colonial past is no longer applicable in light of the changes that have reshaped the higher education landscape worldwide and in the Caribbean.

Student demands for greater quality have been more pronounced over the past two decades and present a force that institutions worldwide and in the Caribbean have had to contend with. This is primarily where they play a role as active contributors in financing their higher education. Their demands, like those of other stakeholders, have led the sector to focus on issues of greater efficiency, transparency, and accountability in the same way that private sector organizations do. Universities elsewhere and in the Caribbean have recognized the importance of garnering and acting on the

perceptions of students as a way of managing in the competitive environment and this has been carried out mainly through surveys. At the UWI, issues of student concerns have been captured in annual incoming and exit surveys and on a larger scale, the perceptions of UWI's employers have been solicited. These have served to effect changes in its operations as discussed in chapter 2.

Competition has been spurred on as a result of market forces which heightened over the last two decades as the sector worldwide was forced to compete for commodity in the form of prospective students, faculty, and dwindling government funding. The liberalization of higher education with its far-reaching effects has contributed to competition for market among other institutions in the sector resulting in marketization of higher education services.

The higher education sector in the English-speaking Caribbean region includes a diverse set of universities, colleges, community colleges, polytechnics, and other tertiary and higher education institutions which offer post-secondary education and which are also affected by these challenges. Caribbean universities, including the UWI, recognize that the necessary capacity to supply the excess demand for higher education in the region is inadequate. This excess demand is as a result of two main liberalization influences:

- 1) the 1997 mandate of the CARICOM Heads of Government which signified a 15% increase in access and enrollment in the tertiary and

higher education sector (UNESCO 1998). This increase in demand paved the way for existing institutions as well as other institutions to offer tertiary education as well (Leo-Rhynie 2007).

2) General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of 2005 administered by the WTO. WTO promotes free trade in services worldwide which allows for other service providers to be established in countries other than those of origin. The agreement does not allow for governments to be partial to their domestic sectors over foreign-based institution and implies that these sectors, including national and regional universities now compete with foreign-investors (Naidoo 2003; Barlow 2001, cited by Gift 2003).

Caribbean universities, as distinct from other tertiary-level institutions are indigenous and are public, as well as private. The public universities are nationalistic to the extent that they receive financial support from their governments and are expected to develop the needs of their respective countries. Competition in the Caribbean can therefore be viewed at three levels and response to it is based on how these universities are affected. For example, the indigenous national universities are situated in the islands of Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, Jamaica and Guyana and these compete for prospective students nationally, regionally, extra-regionally. The UWI on the other hand has a unique role in the Caribbean: to act as a catalyst for regional development (Nettleford 2002) and to develop Caribbean identity (William 2002). Liberalization forces in higher education have changed the monopoly status of the UWI and have placed it in the present a dynamic environment of fierce competition from extra-

regional institutions, as well as from regional tertiary level institutions, (Beckles et al 2002; Leo-Rhynie 2005, 2007; Whiteley 2002; Stephens 2001). At these two levels, the competition is from foreign “offshore” universities which have been established throughout the Caribbean region or from those situated in North America and the United Kingdom that attract prospective students through offers of scholarship or other financial assistance. The UWI also faces competition at a third level as it competes for national funding due to decreased in government funding since the 1980s. Universities worldwide and in the Caribbean respond to the competition through aggressive marketing of the institutions, as well as through their programme offerings which may take different forms including advertisement and recruitment. The impact of this response worldwide has caused the provision of the higher education sector to be viewed as a commodity to be bought by prospective students, the consumers (Naidoo and Jamieson 2005).

The transformation and evolution of the higher education sector over the past two decades has been driven by insurmountable challenges in the internal and external environment that has significantly changed the sector. It has also been argued that the sector should seek ways to diversify funding through the concept of the “Entrepreneurial University” which Clarke (1998) refers to in his research of European Universities. Clarke, as cited by Shattock (2003), states that “Universities became more entrepreneurial in order to generate funds to enable them to maintain and

enhance their academic position” (Shattock 2003, p. 28). What is called for at the UWI in the transformation process is an “entrepreneurial university”. Shattock (2003) describe it as “being entrepreneurial in academic matters...managing the university holistically where it is recognized that all activities are interrelated and where getting each activity right develops an institutional forward momentum building self confidence to take risks and to invest in success...” (p.156). This will enable the UWI to move to, and be able to sustain the envisaged quality transformation which lies at the upper end of Middlehurst’s (1997) four-stage quality development model - quality transformation - for a holistic quality environment.



## **REFLECTIONS ON THE DBA JOURNEY**

Shortly after the pursuit of the MBA Degree, my mind had been occupied with thoughts concerning the area of research that I should undertake. I desired the opportunity to empower myself with the skills to make further contributions to the UWI at higher levels. The turning point came when I presented a discussion paper in 2003 at a University Management Course (UMC), organized by the Centre for Higher Education Research and Development, University of Manitoba in Canada. The paper presented the Quality Assurance System implemented at the UWI and showed how an administrative quality system could impact the student centredness and quality strategic objectives of the 2002/2007 Strategic Plan and complement the Quality Assurance System for a holistic environment. At the end of the course it became clearer the area of research that I should pursue. The question however of where I would acquire such development remained unresolved. The answer came in July 2002 when I participated in the Association of Caribbean Higher Education Administrators (ACHEA) Conference in Trinidad and was informed about the Doctor of Business Administration in Higher Education Management offered at the University of Bath. Two years later, I commenced my journey on this programme.

The 2004 DBA Cohort engaged in interactive study and learning which proved valuable as we were able to benefit from shared perspectives in

higher education as put forward by Bournier, Bowden and Laing (2001). The four research papers in Phase 1, under the headings: Strategic Organizational Change in Higher Education, Strategic Issues in Higher Education Development and Management, and Research Methods were conducted when relevant issues were high on UWI's agenda. The first, *'An Analysis of the Strategic Planning Process'* at the UWI coincided with the strategic planning exercise being conducted at the UWI during the same period and which equipped me to offer suggestions during the preparation of the strategic planning process that contributed to the 2007/2012 Strategic Plan. The second assignment entitled *'An Evaluation of the Relationship between the Governance Structure and Quality Assurance System'* was also conducted during the same period that the UWI was engaged in an evaluation of the main organs of the Governance Structure following ten years of its implementation.

In contemplating the topic for my third assignment, I used the paper presented at the University Management Course as the basis for my discussion. This was entitled, *'Creating a Holistic Environment: The Case for an Administrative Quality Assurance System at the UWI'*. This assignment, along with the Research Methods offered a holistic view of quality and also formed the base of the thesis. The introductory presentation of the Research Methods module made me think whether or not I had made the right decision about the DBA programme as discussions on some philosophical assumptions such as epistemology and

ontology left me quite anxious and puzzled. As a novice researcher, I therefore found it important to consult the works of other researchers, including Cresswell (2007) in order to explore my developing philosophy.

On receipt of 'boarding pass' from The Board of Examiners, in 2007, I began the thesis journey into the great unknown! Approval of three months Study Leave at the UWI proved beneficial as during these months, I acquainted myself with the research process. As the residential visits ended, I realized how lonely this part of the journey could be as my only interaction with the University of Bath from then onwards was mainly through the internet or telephone. I set out to learn the art of critical writing to prepare the theoretical orientation for the literature review and I drew heavily on the works of Wallace and Wray (2006), Wallace and Poulson (2003) and Hart (1998) which gave me great insights to the initial literature review process. The preparation of the literature review, the presentation of the findings in an interesting way from the very large database, the mammoth task of transcribing a large portion of the interviews proved most challenging for me. I also found the work on the 'findings' chapter to be extremely tiring, time-consuming, mind boggling and never-ending mainly because of the kind of recursive analysis that I carried out on such a large database.

The research process became less lonely and apprehensive when I decided to engage more frequently in dialogue, my supervisor who so ably guided

me through the chapters. Prior to this, I found it unsettling to offer work that, in my estimation, was less than high quality and I felt it necessary to first acquire the necessary research skills. In the pursuit of enhancing my research skills, I registered in an intense Graduate Training Workshop offered by the Language Training Centre, Faculty of Humanities at the UWI. I subsequently got involved in a Coaching Group organized by this department and facilitated by Dr. Karen Carpenter, Research Fellow in the department. Working with other doctoral candidates in this group was gratifying as we were able to guide and motivate each other while at the same time, keeping abreast of our own individual research schedules. The peer supervision, coaching received from each other, and the group presentations have helped to prepare me to coach other graduate students. These preparations helped me to dispel the myth that a researcher should bring prior knowledge of a taught process to the research table, when in fact research knowledge is acquired while doing the work itself (Etherington, 2004). This journey has therefore equipped me to hone the research skills necessary in the conduct of an institutional study of the UWI, which is of great significance at this time especially as it focuses on “transforming the administrative culture and processes of the institution” (The UWI Strategic Plan 2007-2012 (pp. 10, 29). My outlook to research has changed from one which was intimidating, to one which is approachable. In March 2008, I, along with two UWI graduates, and current supervisors of graduate students, facilitated presentations and

discussions with post-graduate students at the UWI, in a Quality Forum entitled, “Preparing a Quality Thesis”. The forum was organized by the Programme Officer, Quality Assurance Unit, on the Mona Campus in collaboration with the Office of Graduate Studies (The UWI Quality Circle 2008). The participants found the session very useful and learned quite a bit about their role in the research process. I intend to continue serving the UWI in this fashion.

Prof. Ian Jamieson, my supervisor must be commended for his very timely responses and constructive comments to the thesis preparation. He went over and beyond the call of duty in returning my drafts in far less time than the regulations specified. This student-centred approach is indeed a ‘best practice’ which paved the way for me to have progressed to this stage.

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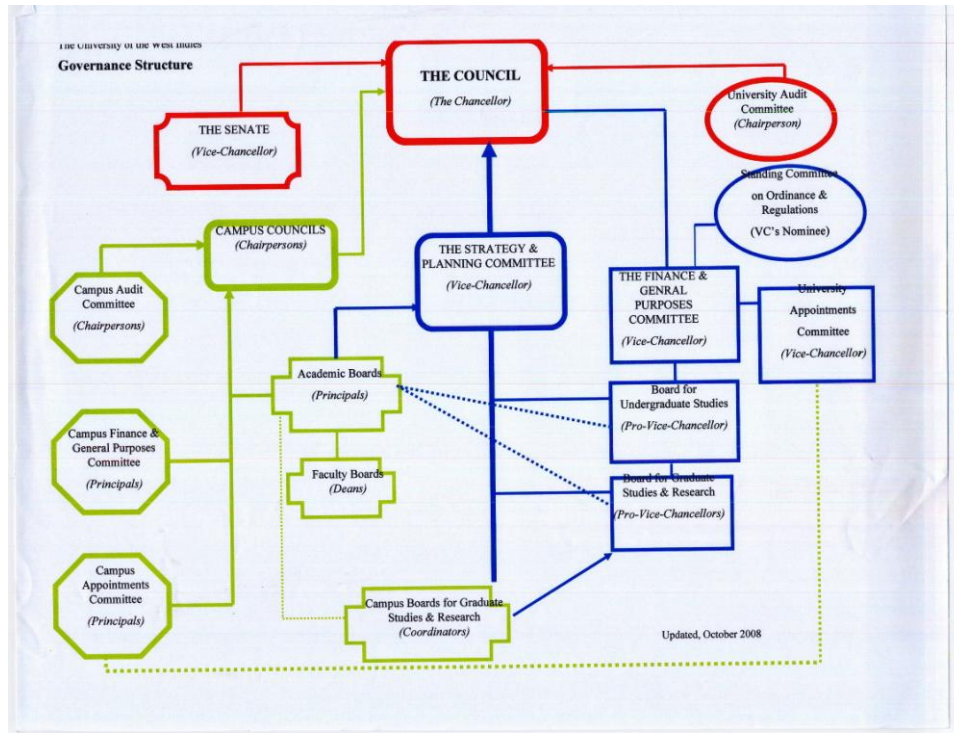
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## Appendix 2



Dr Rajani Naidoo  
Director of Studies



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04 July 2007

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION –  
HIGHER EDUCATION MANAGEMENT (DBA-HEM)

RESEARCH FOR THE DOCTORAL THESIS

I write on behalf of Angella Stephens who is a doctoral student on the DBA(HEM) Programme at this University. She is now at the thesis stage of the programme; her thesis title is;

**'Creating a Holistic Environment: The Case for Administrative Quality at the UWI, Mona Campus'**

As part of her research, Angella is required to carry out a survey of staff at UWI. We trust you will offer her your cooperation and assistance.

Please contact us at the above address or email [dbahem@management.bath.ac.uk](mailto:dbahem@management.bath.ac.uk) if there are any questions regarding this matter. We greatly appreciate your kind assistance.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

pp

Dr Rajani Naidoo  
Director of Studies

June 2, 2007

4 Simms Avenue  
College Green  
Hope Pastures, Kingston 6

Dear

I am a member of the Senior Administrative Staff at the University of the West Indies, pursuing a Doctorate in Business Administration in Higher Education Management at the University of Bath (UOB) in the United Kingdom. Approval for the conduct of this research has been granted by The Ethics Committee, UOB. The research is being supervised by Prof. Ian Jaimeson, Professor of Education and Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Teaching and Learning.

I am in the process of preparing a doctoral thesis on the topic: 'Creating a Holistic Environment: The Case for Administrative Quality at the UWI, Mona Campus' and I invite your participation in an interview.

The aim of the interview is to solicit information from members of Senior Management, Senior Administrative Staff, Academic Staff, and students on issues relating to the management of the UWI. Your participation would prove invaluable on the basis of the responsibilities to both staff and student affairs which fall under your portfolio.

I wish to assure you that your identity will be protected and also that your response to the questions posed will be treated in strict confidence. As evidence of your formal consent to participate in this research, I should appreciate if you would sign both copies of this letter, a copy of which should be retained for your record.

Thanking you for your participation.

Yours sincerely,

Angella Stephens (Ms.)  
DBA Candidate  
University of Bath

Encl. – Consent Form

## CONSENT FORM

I formally consent to participate in the research titled: 'Creating a Holistic Environment: The Case for Administrative Quality at the UWI, Mona Campus' conducted by Angella M. Stephens, DBA Candidate, University of Bath, United Kingdom.

Full name .....

Signature .....

Date .....

4 Simms Avenue  
College Green  
Hope Pastures, Kingston 6

May 12, 2008

Dear Student:

I am a member of the Senior Administrative Staff at the University of the West Indies, pursuing a Doctorate in Business Administration in Higher Education Management at the University of Bath (UOB) in the United Kingdom. Approval for the conduct of this research has been granted by The Ethics Committee, UOB. The research is being supervised by Prof. Ian Jamieson, Professor of Education, and Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Learning and Teaching.

I am in the process of preparing a doctoral thesis on the topic: 'Creating a Holistic Environment: The Case for Administrative Quality at the UWI, Mona Campus' and I invite your participation in a focus group study.

The aim of the focus group is to solicit information from students on your perceptions and experiences of the quality of the administrative service at the UWI, Mona Campus. Your participation as a student would prove invaluable.

I wish to assure you that your identity will be protected and also that your response to the questions posed will be treated in strict confidence. As evidence of your formal consent to participate in this research, I should appreciate if you would sign both copies of this letter, a copy of which should be retained for your record.

Thanking you for your participation.

Yours sincerely,

Angella Stephens (Ms.)  
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**1<sup>st</sup> Level Interview Schedule**  
**(Senior Management, Senior Administrative Staff, Academics, Senior Academic Administrators)**

**Title of Research:** Creating a ‘holistic’ environment: The Case for Administrative Quality at the UWI, Mona Campus

**Central Question:** What administrative framework in higher education guides how UWI administrators’ approach quality?

-----

**Research question 1.** Is there a framework in higher education that guides how UWI administrators’ approach quality? (e.g. TQM, IiP). Please explain this framework.

- a What is the most distinctive feature in this framework?
- b When was this framework implemented?
- c Who were involved in its implementation?
- d Was there any specific factors that drove the need for its implementation?
- e Is the framework written down (formal)?
- f Who drafted this framework?
- g Has it ever been modified/revised?  
if yes, on what basis? When was this done?

**Research question 2.** How applicable is this framework in guiding how UWI administrators approach quality?

- 1. Please explain applicability of framework
  - a. Does this framework work for UWI? Please explain
  - b. For whom does it work?
  - c. Are there any significant accomplishments of this framework? (Strengths/Success(es) – How do you judge if it is successful or not? On the basis of what evidence? Who makes such a judgement)
  - d. Are there challenges/weaknesses?
  - e. Who are the real clients/customers of the administrative system i.e. target clients/customers?
  - f. How would you prioritize these clients/customers i.e. immediate/secondary?
  - g. Why do you feel the need to have a framework?
  - h. Does the framework make any assumption(s) about the behaviour of the clients/customers?



- 2 Given the adverse responses of students to the annual surveys on the issue of quality in **other aspects of the University's operations**, how is the UWI handling comments such as poor customer service, administrative inefficiencies etc.
  - how are surveys used? - who sees it?
  - are they discussed? - with whom?
  
- 3 Some students have expressed the view that they are not interested in participating in the annual surveys as they (students) do not see any changes.
  - a. What would you say to them in this regard?
  - b. What other ways (apart from surveys) could be used in canvassing the views of these students?
  - c. Are there any other drivers (apart from surveys) for change
  - d. What changes would be made if any
  - e. Why would you want to change things

**Research question 3.** To what extent does the management style and culture of the UWI as a whole, affect administrative quality?

1. In your view how would you describe the overall management style of the UWI?
2. Please describe the overall the culture of the UWI?
3. Is this management style compatible with the approach to administrative quality? Please explain
4. How does the administrative framework you described earlier fit in with the culture?
5. What do you think is the ideal culture to implement and sustain an administrative framework for quality?
  - ideal for whom?

**Research question 4** What do UWI administrators and customers (staff and students) see as the criteria for administrative quality?

1. How would you explain the impact of the implementation of the framework(s) identified
  - intended effects - unintended effects
2. What do you think the ideal framework should be like? (Identify criteria)
  - ideal framework for whom
  - are there any performance indicators against which things can be judged e.g. number of students' complaints

**THE END**  
**THANK YOU**

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Level Interviews

### Interview schedule (Senior Management, Senior Administrative Staff, Academic & Senior Academic Administrative Staff)

**Title of Research:** Creating a ‘holistic’ environment: The Case for  
Administrative Quality at the UWI, Mona Campus

**Central Question:** What administrative framework in higher education  
guides how UWI administrators’ approach quality?

---

**Research question 1.** Is there a framework in higher education that  
guides how UWI administrators’ approach quality? (e.g. TQM, IiP)  
Please explain this framework -:

- a What is the most distinctive feature in this framework?
- b When was this framework implemented?
- c Who were involved in its implementation?
- d Was there any specific factors that drove the need for its  
implementation?
- e Is the framework written down (formal)?
- f Who drafted this framework?
- g Has it ever been modified/revised?  
if yes, on what basis, when was this done

**Research question 2.** With reference to the framework you  
described, as well as the following identified by other respondents how is  
UWI functioning?

Frameworks identified by other respondents:

- Customer Charter and Standards
- Training Policy/Training Culture – at all levels
- Like TQM – Development of total quality staff and students
- Quality Assurance (across administration and academic)
- UWI Mission
- Strategic Plan
- Duties Rules and Responsibilities for Heads of departments

1.
  - a Do these frameworks work for UWI?
  - b For whom do they work?
  - c Are there any significant accomplishments of these  
frameworks? Strengths? Success (es)– How do you judge if it  
is successful or not? On the basis of what evidence? Who  
makes such a judgement?
  - d Are there challenges/weaknesses with these frameworks?
  - e Why do you feel the need to have a framework?

- f Do the frameworks make any assumptions about the behaviour of the clients?
2. Given the adverse responses of some students to the annual surveys on the issue of quality in **other aspects of the University's operations**, please explain how the UWI plans to deal with these responses e.g. poor customer service, administrative inefficiencies etc.
    - b) Please state - how are surveys used? Who sees it? Are they discussed? With whom?
  - 3 Some students have expressed the view that they are not interested in participating in the annual surveys as they (students) do not see any changes.
    - a. What would you say to them in this regard?
    - b. What other ways (apart from surveys) could be used in canvassing the views of these students?
    - c. Are there any other drivers (apart from surveys) for change
    - d. What changes would be made if any
    - e. Why would you want to change things

**Research question 3.** To what extent does the management style and culture of the UWI as a whole, affect administrative quality?

1. In your view how would you describe the overall management style of the UWI?
2. Please describe the overall culture of the UWI?
3. Is this management style compatible with the approach to administrative quality? Please explain
4. How does the administrative framework you described earlier fit in with the culture?
5. What do you think is the **ideal** culture to implement and sustain an administrative framework for quality? - ideal for whom?

**Research question 4.** What do UWI administrators and customers (staff and students) see as the criteria for administrative quality?

1. Who are the real clients/customers of the administrative system i.e. target clients/customers?
2. How would you prioritize these clients/customers i.e. immediate/secondary?
3. What do you think the ideal framework should be like? (list criteria) Ideal framework for whom? Are there any performance indicators against which things can be judged, e.g. number of students' complaints.

**THANK YOU**

## **FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE**

### **GREETING AND INTRODUCTION**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group study, the purpose of which is to discuss your perceptions and experiences of the quality of the administrative service at the UWI, Mona Campus. I am interested in understanding the efficiency of processes and procedures at different stages of your undergraduate degree starting with your application, registration, examination, and graduation.

### **EXPLANATION OF THE PROCESS**

The role of the facilitator

The role of the group

Confidentiality of information received

Importance of recording information

### **SECTION A – DEMOGRAPHICS**

Faculty: Humanities & Education, Social Sciences, Pure & Applied Sciences, Medical Sciences, Law

Year registered: 200\_ Expected year of graduation 200\_

Registration Status: P/T - F/T Gender: (M) or (F)

### **SECTION B - GENERAL STUDENT DATA**

Why did you choose to study at the UWI?

What was your image of the UWI before admission?

What is the image of the UWI at present?

In your view, how does the UWI perceive students? Please explain

With which group of students does the UWI place highest priority?

### **SECTION C – EXPERIENCES AT UWI**

I wish to find out your experience during the following stages of your UWI life

#### **APPLYING TO THE UWI**

What were your expectations?

Were these expectations met?

Please describe the application process

- Was it straightforward?
- Easy to follow?
- How did you find the personnel that you interacted with?
- - knowledgeable, informative, helpful, competent, professional, available, customer centred?

Information provided. Was the information adequate, timely, clear?

**REGISTRATION**

What were your expectations?

Were these expectations met?

Please describe the process

- Was it straightforward?
- Easy to follow?
- How did you find the personnel that you interacted with?
- - knowledgeable, informative, helpful, competent, professional, available, customer centred?

Information provided. Was the information adequate, timely, clear?

**EXAMINATION**

What were your expectations?

Were these expectations met?

Please describe the Examination process

- Was it straightforward?
- Easy to follow?
- How did you find the personnel that you interacted with?
- - knowledgeable, informative, helpful, competent, professional, available, customer centred?

Information provided. Was the information adequate, timely, clear?

**GRADUATION**

What were your expectations?

Were these expectations met?

Please describe the process

- Was it straightforward?
- Easy to follow?
- How did you find the personnel that you interacted with?
- - knowledgeable, informative, helpful, competent, professional, available, customer centred?

Information provided. Was the information adequate, timely, clear?

**SECTION C – CRITERIA FOR ADMINISTRATIVE QUALITY**

Were your views elicited for any of these processes? If so, when?

Were they implemented (please explain)

Do you see yourselves contributing to the UWI after graduation?

If you had to make changes to any of these processes what would some of these include? Why?

What are some of the criteria for administrative quality?

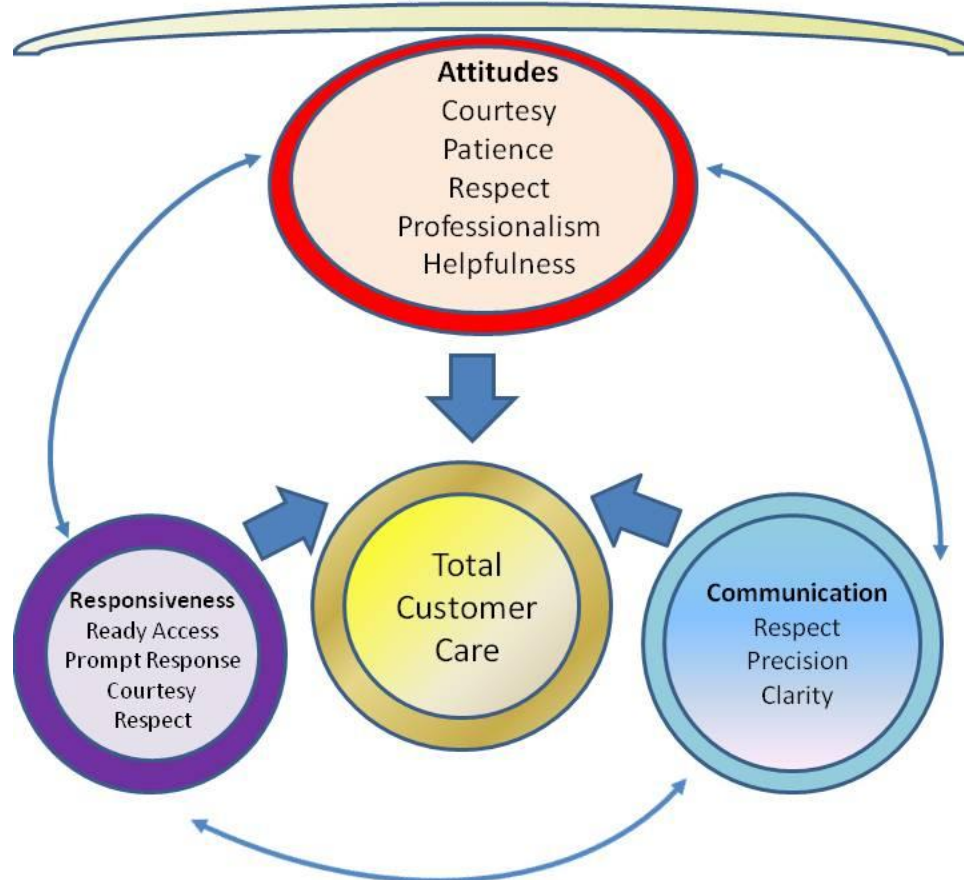
**THE END  
THANK YOU**



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES MONA CAMPUS

*Customer Service Charter*

AIM: Building a total Customer Care Culture geared towards the delivery of Quality Service.



For details of the Charter, please visit our website at [www.uwimona.edu.jm/hrd](http://www.uwimona.edu.jm/hrd)

